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Catherine Scott-Smythe
Headborough

A
WINTER IN ITALY.

IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

BY
MRS. ASHTON YATES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTER XXIV.

Naples.

I AM inconsolable; I have no spirits for writing, no pleasure now in continuing the account, (such as it is,) that I have given you of our tour. A whole packet of my letters has been lost.

I am afraid you will not be so much alive to this misfortune as I am. Call it vanity, or what you like, but I do deplore the accident which has interrupted my narrative; as only in letters for your perusal did I keep any record of the impressions made upon my mind during our delightful excursions from hence along

the sea coast. In vain should I attempt to retrace the feelings and ideas I set down in the order they arose, and which, if I were to attempt now to pourtray, would come to my recollection, pouring in fast as the falling leaves of autumn, but, like them, a heterogeneous assemblage, dried up, withered, and, I am afraid, as devoid of beauty, in comparison of the spring-like effusions arising from my first gladdened and awakened impressions.

Besides, I am very much disposed to cry, when all the particulars come before me, of what I, at least, am inclined to consider our mutual loss; and the mist of tears is unfavourable to the glowing descriptions that, to render them faithful, I ought to give of the scenery in which we have been luxuriating.

I told you, in the first instance, of our having left Naples, at an early hour of the morning, and whoever would view fair Naples aright, ought not to look upon it alone "by the pale moonlight," or noontide effulgence, but also by that of the glorious sun, newly risen be-

hind the hills—its radiance marking their elevation, broken into great masses, crossed by lines of palaces, intermixed with hanging gardens, terraces, and the buildings peculiar to Italy, called Belvedere. Then farther from the city we saw the coast, indented deeply on either side of the harbour; castles and towers on projecting points, the castle of St. Elmo proudly rising over all;—ships and boats variously displayed, some in clusters near to the quays and moles, others pursuing their path on the sparkling water, their sails glistening like silver gossamer in the rays of the sun.

Our vessel was a steam-boat, and crowded to excess. The pleasure of meeting and accosting friends, at first was all engrossing to many of our companions. We had no acquaintances on board, and were therefore spared the greetings which would have interfered with our contemplation of the Bay of Naples and its *entourage*, at that “hour of prime.”

We first stopped at the island of Capræ. Only half an hour was allowed to passengers

for remaining there; too short a time to admit of our climbing the steep ascent by which alone there is access to any inner portion of the island. A number of boats came close to the steamer, to convey the passengers a short distance to an azure cave, in the side of one of the rocks of which the island is composed. So many persons were hurrying forward together as to render it apparently a dangerous adventure. Some boatmen were shouting to the passengers to advance, others to keep back, in order that the fares might not be all engrossed by the first comers.

We waited until the uproar had, in some measure, subsided, and then followed the example that had been set us, and went first into a larger boat, which conveyed us to another lying at the entrance of the cave, so small as only to admit two persons besides the rowers. The opening through which we had to pass was so low and narrow, that we were constrained to bend our bodies low, as if making a salaam to Neptune, whilst the men fixed their oars for a

moment against the side of the rock, and a wave sent us forwards into the most beautiful marine apartment that imagination could conceive. It is of a dome-like form, of considerable extent, and gives forth the many changing hues of mother-of-pearl.

I looked around for the mother of the loves and her attendant graces, for as she certainly did once abide with the "blue-haired sisters of the main," I thought assuredly this must have been her favourite grotto. The rowers carried us to and fro, but she was not to be found, and in her absence we amused ourselves by gazing through the clearness of the water on the pebbly ground beneath.

Apropos of clear water—never did I see any thing like the clear blueness of the sea around Capræ. To say it is of the tint of the turquoise, would not give you any adequate idea of it; the soil beneath, it seems, is of perfect whiteness, which perhaps accounts for the sea assuming a delicacy in its blueness such as I have never seen anywhere, but in a glacier or

some master-piece of Sèvres china. You will laugh, I doubt not, at this last comparison in describing hues, that perhaps I ought to say, “have words, and speak to one of Heaven.” However that may be, I own the hitherto unrivalled colour of the aforesaid porcelain was uppermost in my thoughts.

In leaving the cave, again we bowed our heads as making obeisance to the genius of the place, and an ebbing wave carried us beyond its precincts. This cave cannot be approached when the sea is rough, for boisterous waves would inevitably dash against the rocks such a fragile concern as can alone enter when the weather is propitious.

Capreae was a favourite place of occasional resort of the Emperor Augustus, who had several magnificent buildings erected there. He visited it for a few days shortly before his death, when he is said to have dreamed that he saw an old decayed oak become verdant again, which he took as an omen of his recovery. Almost immediately after his dream—fallacious as many

others which cheat us all in our waking as well as sleeping hours—he repaired to Nola, where he died. He was not, as it would appear, of the same opinion as a great man of later times, who has said, “ For this tide of life, after it once turneth and declineth, ever runneth with a perpetual ebb and falling stream, but never floweth again. Our leaf, once fallen, springeth no more ; neither doth the sun nor the summer adorn us again with the garments of new leaves and flowers.”

Having regained the steam-boat, we passed close under the perfectly perpendicular rock, six hundred feet high, and still bearing the name of Salto, from whence Tiberius was in the habit of having his, oftentimes unconscious, victims hurled headlong, even whilst walking with himself as they imagined, in security, and holding friendly discourse. The ministers of his diabolical purposes were in attendance, and seizing, dashed them into the sea, where a number of persons lying in wait, with long poles

crushed their bodies. Even before the monster had grown old in crime, he practised similar atrocities in the isle of Rhodes, where the astrologer Thrasillus had a narrow escape. He had predicted imperial greatness for his ingenious pupil in the occult art, who, being impatient to test his knowledge of the future, conducted him to a high cliff, together with an able-bodied freedman, who had instructions, to precipitate the star-gazer into the sea, as he had already done to other persons. Tiberius inquired if the wise man who foresaw his prospective greatness had ever cast his own nativity and could foresee what was to happen that year, that very day. Thrasillus, struck with terror, looked towards the Heavens, and said that he perceived it was the crisis of his fate, and the next moment might be his last. His ready wit saved him. Tiberius no longer doubting the predictions of his own aggrandizement, congratulated the seer on his knowledge, as well as on his escape from danger.

The astrologer of Louis XI. of France, according to Sir Walter Scott, was equally felicitous in extricating himself from destruction.

We regretted that it was not in our power to see more of the island of Capræ than its rocky ramparts; but it was impossible, unless we spent the night there, for which we were not prepared.

We landed at some distance from the plain of Sorrento, which is a flat piece of land situated at the foot of a range of hills, and is supposed to be the crater of an extinct volcano. In every direction there are numerous extremely deep ravines caused, the geologists say, by the rocks having divided in some of nature's convulsive moments. Now orange and lemon trees are abounding in those ravines.

From Naples the coast goes in a curve to Sorrento which is situated exactly opposite, and from its northern aspect we found it deliciously cool and verdant, and free from the arid appearance of the neighbourhood of Naples before the vines and fig trees had put forth their tender

leaves. The rocky heights there indeed often display pendant flowers — mesembryanthum, stocks, &c., but little or none, at any time, of the rich drapery of ferns and parasitical plants, which luxuriantly adorn those of Sorrento.

After a long walk from the shore, we reached the hotel to which we had been directed, the “Casa di Tasso,” the same in which the poet was born; but doubtless it is much changed since the period of his birth, three centuries ago. It is a large and cheerful house, in which are found excellent accommodations. The floors of the rooms are composed of earthenware tiles, such as were formerly used around our fire-places, called Dutch tiles. These are now made in Naples of different patterns, and are in great request for floors, from being both cool and cleanly in no common degree.

As I wandered through the best suite of apartments allotted for our use, I could not help conjecturing in which of them the poor harassed, afflicted poet had the memorable interview with his sister, (who had married and

continued to reside in the paternal mansion,) when, having found his way thither in a peasant's dress, he believed she could not possibly recognise him, his changed and forlorn appearance being so different from the happy aspect he had worn when they parted. But with the sure tact of woman's love, she held out her arms to embrace him, whilst he, bathed in tears, sank at her feet overpowered by his feelings. Well had it been for his future peace had he abjured patrons and courts, and been content to lead a rural life with his fond sister at Sorrento, had he known himself "and reverenced the lyre." But, alas! for the weakness of even the most highly gifted of our species! After having returned, like the wearied and too enterprising dove to the parent nest, he did not, unfortunately, like her, end his days there, but again plumed his wings for adventures destined to make him still more wretched.

Having paid the hapless bard due homage in such thoughts as were suggested by his birth-

place, we sat down to a good dinner, and afterwards proceeded between two and three miles through orange-groves, some of our party riding on mules, and others walking up a steep ascent to the Capo di Monte, from whence we could see towns, headlands, and islands, but most conspicuous was Naples, irradiated by the sun that had lighted it up in the morning, and was again casting around a richness and a glory which seemed veritably, and not metaphorically, to render it "*un pezzo di cielo.*" The clouds "in thousand liveries dight," had their effulgence reflected upon the wide expanse of water, and all of nature that we beheld was flushed with beauty.

We were seated under a group of overhanging orange-trees, and could scarcely be prevailed on by the guide to turn our backs on the enchanting scene we gazed upon, where "skies beneath in answering colours glowed." But the sombre change beginning, which inevitably falls on all things, however bright and dazzling, that per-

tain to this world, we were constrained to retrace our steps, and when we reached our hotel darkness was enveloping all around.

The following morning, we mounted our mules at rather an early hour, and rode over hill and dale, admiring the finely diversified and well-planted country. From the elevated point called Airola, we could perceive, at the same moment, the Bay of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno in opposite directions. The day was fine, and the picturesque scenery was enlivened by the carolling of vine-dressers responding to each other from a distance in animated strains. There were others also sowing seeds in the gardens and fields, whom we heard, as we approached Salerno, sending forth sounds between shouting and singing, which our guide said were "per allegro."

We met a bridal party returning from the ceremony that had united a pair of youthful lovers. A pretty and gaily-dressed rustic girl was accompanied by companions of her own age; they were followed by the bridegroom and

a set of merry young men. The little rural church was in view ; where the plighted vows were given, for weal or woe.

We should probably have been fatigued by so protracted an excursion, had we not been so much gratified by the cheerful pleasing aspect of the scenery. We were not surprised to hear that some of our countrymen, with their families, make Sorrento their temporary abode during the summer.

The next morning, we got a four-oared boat, and for some hours coasted along the shore, where we saw the foundations of houses and temples in the water, as at Baiæ. It is supposed the land on which they stood sank to its present low position, owing to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions ; but Sorrento has not been deserted, like Baiæ, for the heights above the sea are fully built upon.

We saw in the rocks several deep caverns, some natural and some artificial. Amongst the latter is one sixty or seventy feet in length, and of considerable breadth ; it resembles the aisle

of a cathedral ; the pavement is under water, which is not of depth sufficient to admit the entrance of a boat. In some of those caves and grottos formerly lived the renowned Syrens, against the destructiveness of whose magic song Ulysses caused all ears to be stopped, excepting his own, and he was too wise even to leave himself at liberty to be seduced by their pernicious charms—an unnecessary precaution in his case, for he was so good that all female blandishments were thrown away upon him. Sorrento was anciently called Syrentum, from being the place of abode of the captivating ladies whose powers of enchantment sometimes reappear amongst their sex when least expected. But of course, on such occasions, Ulysses' example is not forgotten.

After seeing various other objects of interest at Sorrento, we proceeded to Castelamare by a road lying above the sea, which reminded us of the pass of Penmanmauer. The town is built on the sea-coast : close in the rear are steep and high-wooded hills, abounding in villas, to which

the wealthy Neapolitans, and others also, repair in summer, on account of the fine air and scenery, as well as for the benefit of salubrious springs in the neighbourhood. The king has a country-house there, and the ambassadors to his court find agreeable residence for their villeggiatura amongst the cool, shady recesses of the hills. Houses are there let at higher prices than anywhere else in the vicinity of Naples.

Surrounded by modern elegant villas, and very grandly situated, stands a fine old gothic castle, and though suffered to go to ruin, its round towers are still of very imposing strength; it looks like a stranger and intruder from the north, not naturalized in the country of its location, where, in general, all ruins that are not of an ecclesiastical or religious character, are more ancient than such as belong to the middle ages; whereas, I believe that for the most part the oldest *débris* to be met in other parts of Europe, are of the *bassi tempi*, many of the fine buildings belonging to which period, we

have especial reason to congratulate ourselves, are still in good preservation.

On leaving Castelamare, we were refreshed by cool breezes from the Apennines, which lay to the right, and are now in some degree clothed with verdure. We were glad to be surrounded again by scenery of a description that we all enjoy. We saw many pretty little clusters of houses in sheltered recesses shut out apparently from the turmoil of the world.

As we approached Salerno, its fine gulf, larger than the Bay of Naples, expanded before us. The town, like Castelamare, is built along the shore, and is in the same way backed by hills that are immensely steep, much higher, and of a still more picturesque character. On the topmost pinnacle of one are ruined fortifications.

The bay at one end is terminated by the bold Cape of Minerva, and at the other by the promontory of Leucasia, anciently called Promontorium Posidium.

Salerno was formerly a place of great cele-

brity, and could boast of a university and a school of medicine resorted to from all parts of Italy. We went to see some fine old churches, and also some Roman remains in bronze and marble, of great antiquity. Salerno is not now considered a healthy residence, on which account it is not, like Sorrento and Castelamare, frequented by summer visitors, but great numbers go there, like ourselves, *en route* to Paestum—it being nearly half way between that place and Naples.

We set off at an early hour in the morning for Paestum, a distance of about twenty-five miles. I cannot now recall the description I gave you of that wondrous place. Suffice it to say, we left our carriage at a poor sort of public house, and walked thence a considerable way to the solemn scene of desolation. There are no ruins of an ordinary kind very apparent, although, overgrown with rank grass and briers, are the remains of the walls and towers that once environed a great city. The former were two miles and a half in circumference, and like

the ancient Etruscan, composed of immense blocks of close and exact fitting stone. There were four entrances, one of which, an archway fifty feet high, is still massive and unbroken; but of houses there are no vestiges that are not deeply imbedded in the earth.

Now barren hills surround the plain, where a large population dwelt, judging by the vast size of the three grand temples that in such wide extended solitude strike one with religious awe. They are of the Doric order, and composed of yellowish grey travertino cut into blocks, joined together without any cement. These were covered with a thin stucco, of which there being only very small remains, the junctions of the stones are all laid bare. The external pillars of the largest temple (which is one hundred and ninety-seven feet in length, and eighty in depth) are nearly perfect, and not a great deal of the pediment they sustain is injured. All three are much less dilapidated than any ancient temple we have seen, excepting the Pantheon.

There is great magnificence in the noble symmetry of their simple Grecian structure, defying all the effects of time and other destroying influences that annihilated the surrounding city. They still stand in their massive grandeur, attesting that generations long since swept away, who left no other memorial, felt, as we do now, an impelling necessity to go beyond themselves, and adore an overruling power. Man's strongest impulse, and one of the first wants of his moral nature, is here set forth in temples that, like the Pyramids of Egypt, have their origin lost in the darkness of past ages. At Pæstum one's attention is not divided, as at Pompeii, by various objects; but few traces of man remain amidst the bleak hills and barren desert, save where he worshipped. The sublimity of that solemn scene none can imagine who have not felt the religious awe it inspires.

* * * * *

Since the destruction of Pæstum by the Saracens in the ninth century, it has been

several times inundated by the overflowing of the river. We are informed that in some parts the ground is covered with a double tufo, under which is vegetable soil, and lower down a bed of sea-sand, a combination which could only be formed in consequence of repeated inundations of the river Silaro, after the destruction of the city, which had been supplied with water brought by an aqueduct from Mount Calpazio.

After we reached Salerno, we recollect that we had not sought for any of the vaunted roses of Paestum, once reputed to be of surpassing sweetness; but, had we looked for them, I am pretty sure the search would have been vain, for no object met our eyes of cheerful aspect but the bright pink blossoms of the Judas tree; they alone attested that the vegetable world had not been blighted, as well as the human species banished from that region.

The malaria prevails in a fearful degree in the neighbourhood of the extinct city. Still we heard that there are some adventurous

spirits determined to cultivate land on the high grounds in the vicinity.

We got a six-oared boat at Salerno—a father and his five sons were the rowers; the coast from thence to Amalfi, and beyond it, is a succession of small, deeply-indented bays, and at every one of them a town is built close to the water; and up the adjoining steep and craggy heights other villages, some of them of great antiquity, are discernible, the paths leading to which only the mule, the goat, or the hardy pedestrian, can tread.

The day was calm, and the sun not too bright, and for three hours that we were on the water we were enabled to enjoy the most beautiful views imaginable. Our highest poetic ideas of Italy were fully realized. The mountains which rise from the coast are of limestone, broken up and dispersed in forms so varied from the sublime to the beautiful, that to impart any idea of the scenery by means of pen and ink would be impossible; even the powerful pencil of Salvator Rosa, which was more

especially employed in depicting the country around Amalfi, could convey no adequate idea of its manifold beauties—all mountainous, yet full of gardens, vineyards, towns, and villages. Rocks are sometimes clothed with trees and rich verdure, having castles on their boldest summits; whilst convents, hermitages, domes of churches, and the tower-like campanili are to be seen everywhere.

Nothing can be imagined more highly picturesque than the situation of the ancient, and on many accounts most remarkable city of Amalfi, built as it is on the sides of precipitous hills, and in the clefts of rocks. We have all heard of hanging gardens, and that epithet could not be more appropriately applied to the cultivated slopes of Babylon, than to the streets and buildings which rose before us as we advanced to the quay where we landed. Amalfi in externals at a distance, perhaps, does not differ much from the aspect it presented in centuries gone by, for there are the everlasting hills, bold and commanding as ever, overlook-

ing the sea that rolls its multitudinous waves as unceasingly as when it was first divided from the land. But the work of man there, as elsewhere, bears the impress of the instability of his perishable nature and performances. Traces of decay meet our eye at every turn. Where a large population, schools, and men of science once flourished, poor fishermen only reside; at one of whose houses strangers find such accommodation as can be had at Amalfi.

We walked to the beautifully situated convent of Camaldoli, built on a rock that rises out of the sea. As usual, we ladies were denied entrance. We find that nowhere will monks allow what they suppose to be "eyes of most unholy blue" to look upon them. Gentlemen are more fortunate, and one of our party entered, and was well entertained with wine, and also with conversation that turned upon the finding of the Pandects of Justinian in the dusty recesses of the said convent; a circumstance which may be said in many respects to have regenerated the world, causing men to

apply to the study and bow to the authority of laws, and not merely to depend on the dictum of the sword. It is remarkable that to the now obscure town of Amalfi should mankind be indebted for two so important matters, influencing the whole state of society in most parts of the civilized world, as the long-lost Pandects, and the discovery (by a native, Flavio Gioja) of the mariner's compass.*

Early on the following morning some of us ascended to the top of one of the steepest, most craggy heights in the vicinity, where there had been a castle, the ruins of which still remain. Behind a low battlemented wall we could in security look around on the endless forms of swelling hills and sharp-pointed rocks in the rear; while beneath we had an extensive view of the outstretched sea, together with the adjoining and more distant coast, in all its

* The King of Naples being sovereign of Amalfi, and a branch of the royal family of France, he marked the north point of the compass with a fleur-de-lis. Flavio Gioja was born about the year 1300.

curvings and windings. Another ruined castle was also on the crest of a hill not far from where we stood ; and since my observations on that occasion, I can no longer speak of castles in the air as being nonentities. Our guide told us a long story of rival princes having maintained themselves in those impregnable castles, whilst their adherents fought many a battle amongst the surrounding hills, which now echo only to the shepherd's reed. This legend was not sufficiently clear for me to convey to you any idea of it, though exciting enough whilst we listened on the spot to his marvellous relation of the stirring deeds of the mail-clad men of other days.

In passing from one of the streets of Amalfi, we got into a deep ravine, (or glen, called " *Il Val dei Cascade*,") through which a mountain torrent impetuously falls from a neighbouring height. We proceeded by the side of its rushing waters, but were every moment annoyed by the inharmonious noises close in the vicinity, issuing from paper-mills, which substituted a

deafening din for the gladsome sound of the free and rushing element, hastening onwards to the sea like one who had been imprisoned in a foreign land, and elated with the prospect of reaching the destined home, bore away rapidly and joyously over all hindrances and impediments.

We boated a good deal along the deeply-indented winding coast beyond Amalfi, under as varied and precipitous hills and declivities as I believe pen or pencil ever attempted to portray, amidst which are scattered villages, hamlets, and many a ruined castle. The more lowly buildings seem as if seeking shelter in profound recesses; while the others, of menacing aspect even in decay, stand on bold commanding heights: and at frequent intervals, on every point jutting forwards into the sea, are strong massive towers, which were used as watch towers when the Saracens and the Turks were in the habit of visiting the coast. But these did not always guard it as successfully as the hydra-headed

monster defended the garden of the Hesperides, for the Saracens, particularly, made many incursions, built towns, and experienced various triumphs and defeats during the period they frequented this harassed country.

We were told that there is at some distance from Amalfi a small town called Ravella, inhabited by the descendants of the Saracens, where much of their customs and manners is still to be found, and what was the mosque is now a church, enriched by many of the treasures brought from Pæstum.

We were desirous of going there, but were obliged to abandon the project. The town or village in question can only be approached by a very rugged mule-path amongst the mountains, and it was considered too fatiguing an adventure for us ladies.

In returning by boat to Salerno, we entered into one of the deep grottos of the same description as the azure cave at Capræ, which present themselves to view in several of the creeks and bays that run into the land, and

which are overtopped by hills and mountains that reminded us of the varied aspect of the Apennines.

We were not far from Amalfi when the boatmen began to sing, some of them admirably well in parts, and all joined with good effect in chorus. Suddenly, however, their song ceased, their oars rested suspended over the water, and the spokesman of the party pointed out on the mountain's side, near the village of A——, a small white detached house, which he said had belonged to Massaniello, to whose memory a hearty benediction being given by his countrymen, they resumed their oars and song.

We were sorry again to reach Salerno, for we could willingly have passed months upon the shore we had traversed from Sorrento to Amalfi. We delayed at Salerno only long enough to recover from some degree of fatigue, and to adjust sketches made by the pen and pencil, *en route*; useless labour as far as I am concerned, for my notes are gone as irrevocably as the last leaves of the Sibyl, but unlike hers,

I am afraid those that remain will not increase in value.

We returned to Naples by Pompeii, entering in the opposite direction from that by which we had first visited it. We sent round our carriage, and walked again through its forum, theatres, and many streets. The solitude of the latter we were passing along in silence; our curiosity had been previously gratified, our queries answered, and we were yielding to the sombre impressions of the place—its associations not unlike those of the dark valley of the shadow of death,—when there broke suddenly on our ears hearty sounds of men in earnest talk, and apparently, from the noises of implements, at earnest work also. Our startled curiosity was soon allayed, for we quickly came upon a party of workmen excavating walls. We stood by them for some time, whilst they removed a portion of the ashes and lava, and brought to light the brilliant colours of gay festive paintings, that had lain in cimmerian darkness during a long night of centuries. We remained

spell-bound by the forthcoming beauties that the labourers' rude toil displayed, and had it been earlier in the day we should probably have passed some hours in watching their progress; but it was getting late, and of necessity we bade them adieu, and wishing success to their labours, we left the spectral city by the street of tombs.

As we approached Naples, we were again enchanted by one of those glorious sunsets I have so frequently mentioned. Amongst us the sun oftentimes presents a magnificent spectacle, but none, I think, can truly appreciate the splendor it casts around who has not seen it combined with Italian scenery, when it sinks amidst waves that seem for a longer space than usual to retain more of intense brightness from the manifold reflected colours and golden lustre of the departed luminary.

* * * * *

By far too soon will the time arrive for our leaving Naples: we shall take our departure when the coachmaker has fastened loose screws

in our carriage, renovated the sabot and drag-chain, of which, by-the-bye, Italian postilions make such endless use, alighting to put them on at every mole-hill they descry.

When the coachmaker's business is done, (oh, that he would procrastinate !) we must say farewell to Naples; its soft breezes will no more come with balm and freshness to delight our senses; its wonders of volcanic power, spent or in action, no more excite our awe, nor its marvellous antiquities awaken our interest; its varied beauties by sea and land, "the mountains and the streams of song," will no more fill our minds to overflowing with admiration of the works of the Author of nature in this terrestrial paradise of his creation.

LETTER XXV.

Rome.

WE left Naples intending to return home through the mountains of the Abruzzi, and by the way of Palestrina, the scenery being spoken of as remarkably fine. No post-horses are to be had on that road; we therefore engaged four belonging to a Vetturino, together with his own services, he being in the habit of performing the transit with such persons as are content to forego the comfortable accommodations indispensable to most travellers, all expectation of which we were told must be abandoned.

It was decided that we should pass the first night at Capua, which being only a short day's journey from Naples, allowed of our going *en route* to see the Palace of Caserta erected by

Charles III., great-grandfather of his present majesty. I did not suppose that the *Campagna felice* afforded a situation so *triste*, so utterly flat and uninteresting. The palace is in accordance with its *locale*; it is an immense red brick building of four sides, eight hundred feet in length, five stories high, including the Mezzanini, or small windows. It does not possess externally any architectural excellence, excepting that of solidity; and had it been called Caserna, (barrack,) it would be as appropriate a name as could be well given. I was not surprised to hear that during one of the two months in the year that the royal family spend here, the king always passes one of them, the month of April, in camp with his troops.

We entered the palace by a portico, wide enough for carriages, and supported by one hundred pillars. On either side of it the building is divided in two squares, which together are six hundred feet in depth. The portico is only lighted from the squares, and has been well compared to the tube of a telescope, that

presents to the eye a distant cascade, which forms also the *coup d'œil* from the windows, and is backed by low bleak barren hills. The water is brought twenty miles by an aqueduct, for the most part on three tiers of arches, and, strange to say, is not otherwise employed, as at Versailles, for the embellishment of the dull, monotonous pleasure grounds.

In the centre of the palace is an octagonal hall. It opens on the portico, and connects all the ramifications of the vast edifice; from thence ascends a noble staircase twenty feet wide. Each of its hundred steps is a single block of marble; the sides are lined with the finest marbles that Italy and Sicily produce. Nothing, I think, can surpass the magnificence of this staircase, of the octagon vestibule in which it terminates, and the chapel opening thence. But the royal apartments, to which the approach is so grand, are by no means in accordance; they are for the most part ordinary sized, tasteless rooms,—little ornamented, and having each two opposite doors. Some of

the apartments are not shown, being unfurnished. The theatre is superb, but never was used ; it includes twelve noble pillars brought from the temple of Jupiter Serapis, at Pozzuoli.

Near to the cascade, and distant about a mile, we saw some trees, which, as Doctor Johnson said of his walking-stick in Scotland, are valuable timber from their scarcity in the adjoining country. These, we were told, are in a most tastefully laid out and planted English garden. There was attraction in that name in a foreign land, for associated with it are so many of our calm and purest enjoyments, and we should have walked thither but for a shower of rain just then falling *mal à propos*.

The stables and other offices are placed outside the entrance to the palace, without any regard whatever to appearance. Altogether, if Caserta were about half its present size, it would be just such a residence as I should expect to find in Holland, erected by the Dutch for their sovereign. A small, poor town, is a near and not very suitable appendage to the palace.

The rain was not over when we returned to the carriage, but it passed off before we reached the site of the ancient, and once important city of Capua, so that we were enabled, without a drenching, to alight, on arriving at the green fields, in which stands the ruined amphitheatre. Though by no means equal in extent to the Coliseum, this building possesses, to my eye, far more of the remains of antique beauty, surrounded as it is by fallen columns and broken capitals. The bare unornamented walls of the former, in their present denuded, uncoated state, are of a dark red stone; whereas those of the amphitheatre at Capua are of a pale grey stone, and a few of the magnificent arches yet retain some of their sculptured decoration.* A great portion of this noble edifice has been employed in building the modern town of Capua, about a mile and a half

* The French, in removing the rubbish that embedded the Coliseum, stripped it too rigorously of all the graceful accompaniments of architectural decay. An ancient coin is not benefited by being burnished and losing its venerable rust.

distant, and more of the *débris* lies in the arena, which is filled with a mass of ruins. We descended into it, however, to see the dens of the wild beasts and gladiators. The name of Spartacus imparts an interest to the spot whence he, desperate, broke loose, and followed by his fellows, more than once defeated the Roman arms, and at length, after a career of victory, was only vanquished by stratagem, combined with the better discipline of the troops of his opponents, commanded by Crassus. It is an interesting fact that Spartacus was always accompanied to the field of battle by his wife, who never left him, and was believed to have the gift of divination. She doubtless never foresaw aught but victory for her heroic husband, and perhaps contributed to inspire him with the daring spirit that achieved such wondrous deeds as have left behind a sublime impression of the Thracian gladiator.

Besides the ruined amphitheatre and a broken archway, (a noble structure through which we

passed,) and some masses of stones, there are no other remains of a town which once ranked with Rome and Carthage, and had so great an influence on the destiny of both: it was afterwards called the first colony, belonging to the former city, when she was mistress of the world. So complete was the destruction of Capua by Genseric, king of the African Vandals in 455, that nothing was left but ruins and a name.

We just reached the hotel before it became dark. For nearly the first time during our visit to Italy, we found everything (beds included) miserably dirty and bad. This circumstance, perhaps, prepared us next morning to hear with less discontent than we should otherwise have done, our vetturino declare that the rain, which had fallen in the night, and was still pouring in torrents, rendered it impossible, from the badness of the roads, to pursue the proposed route through the Abruzzi, where he again told us, as he had done before, that the accommodations for travellers are far worse than at Capua. Amidst such formidable an-

ticipations and a thick falling rain, that, if it continued, would effectually interfere with everything like enjoyment from scenery, we agreed to turn off into the beaten road, and slept again at Mola di Gaeta, Terracina, and the other places which we had previously visited.

In front of the hotel at Terracina, is a steep hill, on the summit of which are still visible some remains of the palace of Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, who was king of Italy A. D. 489. There are also vestiges of the ancient city of Auxur, of which Terracina is a low-built successor. We did not attempt climbing to see any of the ruins in question. Within the precincts where the palace stood, a monastery was erected, which the French destroyed, together with many others.

When it became dark, we saw the steep rocky hill before our windows bespangled with fireflies, looking as if the stars had deserted their proper sphere, and had come to perform a mystic or a mazy dance in this lower world of ours. On

so pretty and singular a sight we stood gazing, and should probably have remained longer but for the necessity of rising betimes next day. Like fairies who only sport in the midnight hour, the fire-flies were no more to be seen at the early dawn of the following morning. The dark hours, alone render them visible; as in many of our lives, virtues appear in adversity that were little dreamt of by ourselves or others in the sunshine of prosperity and happiness.

Our late *trajet* was more agreeable than the former we had made across the Pontine Marshes, the water on the low grounds being much abated. The Apennines were more diversified in colouring by the advanced state of vegetation; and along the roadside occasionally were trees decked in their leafy honours seen against the clear blue cloudless sky. An all-pervading stillness reigned, unbroken by sound of man or beast, well suited to the neighbourhood of the city which has been so poetically called “the Mother of dead Empires.” No other objects met our eye besides the sombre features of the

landscape, including the ruined aqueducts, save what were in unison with the scene. We observed the course of two eagles hovering over our heads,—those birds so long the ensigns of victory to byegone generations, whose numbers and whose triumphs were replaced by solitude and desolation. The eagles wheeled around in broad expanded wing, or pursued the even steady course where movement was imperceptible, (unless by the progress made,) they flew as vigorously and as grandly as when they were called the harbingers of glory. Kingdoms that associated them with conquest are fallen in the dust, but their flight is unimpaired by human changes; their eyry stands as high as ever. The magnificent birds that fixed our attention would have seemed the sovereigns of the desolate country over which they passed, but that droves of black buffaloes occasionally came into view, whose right to *terra firma* was better founded. With these exceptions, for several hours, we saw no appearance of animal life.

This approach to the Eternal City,

"Childless and crownless in her voiceless woes,"

is far more solemn and appropriate than that by which we had entered. Coming from Naples, where Nature wears such a bright and smiling aspect, to Rome, strikes one in powerful contrast.* It is like bidding adieu to a youthful bride, decked in "a wreath of roses," and beholding instead, the matron's mournful dignity, whose glories are departed, and who now clasps "an empty urn within her widowed hands," but still one feels that she is "the city of the soul." Who that has lived long enough does not know by his own experience that hither have his thoughts and sympathies travelled from childhood's wondering years to those of sober maturity. Here the young patriot comes, in idea at least, to dwell upon the love of country. The embryo orator drinks deep of the fountains

* To these cities the epithets would not be unapt which Milton bestowed on two of his exquisite poems, "L' Allegro," and "Il Pensieroso."

whose pure streams flowed within these walls. The breasts of future poets and historians beat high with admiration of the prototypes who dwelt here, and with whom those hours of learning that have awakened new and lasting emotions in the heart, are for ever allied. He who studies the laws which cement society, and impart to it durability and strength, comes here in spirit to ponder upon the wisdom that has given its impress to our most revered institutions ; and the Christian, whatever may be his creed, beholds with triumph paganism unseated from her loftiest throne, whilst in the rival city of the converted Constantine, the cross has been exchanged for the crescent. Here, then to "the City of the Soul," all come as to a home full of cherished associations, with their noblest desires and most exalted aspirations.

LETTER XXVI.

Florence.

WE left Rome for Florence on the 12th of May, which, according to the old calendar, was the first of the month. Not long after we had started, the rain fell so unceasingly that we could see nothing whatever of the country through which we passed to Viterbo, where we slept the first night. It is a small town that claims to be built on the site of Volterra, the capital of Etruria; but I believe there are scarcely any remains that indicate its right to be considered the actual successor of that ancient city. The cathedral contains the tombs of three or four of the popes. A church dedicated to St. Francis possesses a very striking picture, in which the figures are as large as life:

it was painted by Sebastian del Piombo, and designed by Michael Angelo. Our blessed Saviour is represented lying dead—stretched at full length on a white cloth on the ground; his Virgin Mother is bending over him; they are the sole figures; her uplifted hands are clasped together with an air of fervour and agony; her tearful eyes are raised to Heaven, as if seeking there for re-assurance and confidence in that despairing hour. The landscape is sombre and gloomy, as if all nature participated in her feelings of desolation. A full moon is surrounded by dense masses of black clouds, indicating doubtless the light that has pierced through incumbent darkness, the happiness and glory achieved for men by the profound sorrows and sufferings of their Redeemer. It is altogether a grand conception, the solemn stillness of night suiting well with the awful occasion.

* * * * *

If our hotel, “d’Inghilterra,” had been more comfortable, we should have remained at

Viterbo, so unpromising was the weather when we left it; and the day turned out in all respects just as bad as the preceding; heavy rain and thick fogs obscuring the landscape during the whole of the journey. We could not form any adequate idea of the scenery on the banks of the fine extensive Lake of Bolsena, close to which the road passed; we could, however, distinguish in it two or three wooded islands, one of which was the scene of the death of Amalasunte, the Queen of the Goths, and daughter of Theodoric, King of Italy, the ruins of whose palace we had seen at Terracina. She was murdered by the command of her cousin Theodat, who was afterwards despatched in an equally summary manner by his own general. Thus "even-handed justice" often settles men's accounts, dealing the same measure to them that they have dealt to others.

Near to the lake, and beautifully situated, fine wooded hills rising around, is the town of Bolsena, which looks as if it ought to be associated with the name of some poet inspired by

the pastoral and picturesque charms of the surrounding scenery ; instead of which it was the birth-place of Sejanus, that detestable minister of the monster Tiberius. According to the quaint but significant metaphor of Mr. Carlyle, in speaking of persons or things originally distant but afterwards suitably combining, he compares them to a hook-and-eye, each at first separate, but perfectly adapted to form an intimate union with each other ; and surely hook-and-eye were never better fitted to meet and act in concord than were that execrable pair.

We changed horses at a little village called Acqua Pendente, where fortunately we got two additional horses, making six in all. They soon brought us to a wide river, in which was a very rapid current, much increased by the late heavy rains, and there being no bridge, we drove through it ; the water came up quite close to the carriage door, and if it had been some inches deeper we should have been immersed. We were not at all aware of the risk

we were running until we had gone too far to recede, and saw the exertions our three postillions were making to extricate us from the rushing torrent of water.

At night we reached Râdicofani, where we entered the Tuscan dominions. It is a poor place, situated on the top of a bleak mountain. Another, still higher, is close to it, and has a ruined castle and fortress on its summit. The civil wars that desolated Italy for so long a period have left, in most of the commanding positions, ruined castles and towers, which add very much to the picturesqueness of the scenery. In not a few instances, the looped and battlemented wall destined to give stern defiance to the enemy, has yielded its place to the peaceful convent, to whose admired and inviting church peasants climb with earnestness not inferior to that with which some youthful geniuses scale "the height where Fame's bright temple shines afar." And if the castle or the convent has not taken possession of the mountain's top, a lonely hermit fixes his abode there to hold "commerce

with the skies," and is so far removed from his fellow-men that one might suppose he calculated on being fed, like Elijah, by the ravens. Yet during no length of time that any hermit has so resided were the neighbouring peasants ever found unmindful of his wants; they share their little with him as cheerfully as if he were the lord of all he surveyed.

There is no country, I believe, more full of the materials for poetry than Italy. In commercial countries, the acquisition of wealth, if not pursued by all, more or less directly or indirectly influences men's ideas, and the prevalence of common objects and desires gives a sameness to the external appearance of things. But where the efforts to gain, and the desire to make or preserve property, belong only to a portion of society, life is presented to our view in many colours, and under various aspects, some of them new to persons who have lived in a different kind of world; and perhaps the very novelty confers undue charms, making us wanderers, whose duties lie elsewhere, too fond

of Italy. I am not surprised that the poet of "Memory" should have felt an irresistible impulse again to draw forth sweet sounds from his lyre in this land so rich in beauty and in recollections.

Our next day's journey brought us to Sienna. At our entrance we met a long procession of priests dressed in white, chaunting as they passed through the street. We were told that a similar procession takes place every year on the anniversary of an earthquake that happened forty-five years ago, when very many houses were destroyed, but only two persons lost their lives. Sienna at present contains from eighteen to twenty thousand inhabitants; formerly, at one period the population amounted to one hundred thousand. The population of Pisa, which at the same period contained one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, has suffered a proportionate decrease; and Florence does not include above half the number that once resided within its walls. It is remarkable that these three cities were in the height of

power and prosperity when constantly engaged in mutual war, and marching hostile legions to each other's gates. They do not thrive equally well now that they are living on amicable terms, though all three are at present under the benevolent government of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. There seems such a perversity and contradiction in their case as reminds me of what has been said of an Englishman, that he is never happy but when he is grumbling,—of a Scotchman, that he is never at home but when he is abroad,—and of an Irishman, that he is never at peace but when he is fighting; and so the population of the above-named cities has dwindled, and their importance in Italy has decreased, together with their prosperity, since they are no longer employed in destroying one another. No doubt, some more obscure causes, which escape my superficial observation, have contributed to the decline of their greatness. Still, these cities, as well as the other republics of Italy, which arose out of the ruins of the empire and flourished in the midst of

barbarism, have the honour of being recognised as the preservers of the spirit of liberty ; they transmitted to modern times her torch unquenched through the otherwise dark ages ; and they also mainly contributed to the revival of learning. It was perhaps owing to the power and spirit of enterprise of the republic of Venice that the Turks did not in the fifteenth century become masters of the western, as well as of the eastern empire.

The cathedral in Sienna is one of the very finest churches in Italy. The interior, including the pillars, is composed of black and white marble in equal stripes. Its proportions are more lofty, and I think it altogether finer than the cathedral of Pisa, which, in its materials and architecture, it closely resembles, both being in the style called Gotico-Moresco by the Italians, amongst whom it is said to have been introduced in the eleventh century, and there is no doubt, I believe, was brought from the East at that period, when great commercial intercourse subsisted with the Republics. The other much

purer style of Gothic architecture, introduced by the Northern hordes into Italy, and used in the erection of fortresses and castles, is called *Gotico-Tedesco*.

Every part of the cathedral in Sienna is finished in the most elaborate manner. The front is enriched by the laborious sculpture of many coloured marbles. The Grecian, Gothic, and Saracenic styles were employed for its embellishment. At Burleigh, (the seat of the Marquis of Exeter,) which was built in Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the Grecian style of architecture was introduced into England, and perhaps not understood in its purity by our countrymen, it is combined with the Gothic, and the effect is most rich and grand. A deviation from fixed rules is not unfrequently attended with the happiest results; genius will oftentimes "catch a grace beyond the reach of art."

The pictures in the cathedral are of the first order. Some of them are by Raffaelle, and the various works executed in bronze and marble are of a very high class. The floor through-

out the whole of that great building is of black marble, with figures and embellishments in white marble, beautifully inlaid. The figures are admirably designed and executed. One portion is the workmanship of Beccafumi, who in that manner expended much skill in the construction of Scripture stories. It is a subject of regret that such masterly performances are not on the walls of some building where they could be seen to advantage. Much care, however, is taken for their preservation, by overlaying them with boards that fold back on hinges.

We went afterwards to see some paintings by the same master in the handsome antique Town-hall. The exterior is very like one of the great Venetian public buildings, with which the pictures of Canaletti make us so well acquainted. In front of it are two pillars, surmounted by the well-known wolf suckling the illustrious twins. We observed similar representations on pillars before the cathedral, as well as in other parts of the city. Sienna no doubt was, and is, proud of having been a Roman colony.

The council-chamber in the town-hall is chiefly painted by Beccafumi, but others have also contributed to its pictorial decoration. Attached to it is a most highly embellished chapel, the walls and ceiling of which are painted by Simone da Sienna, Cima da Conigliano, Perugino, &c.

The senate (a body no longer in existence) used to assemble in the chapel, and there attend divine service, before entering on business in the council-chamber ; and the authorities of the town still observe this good practice on days of ceremony, when they proceed thence to the cathedral. On a table in an ante-room we saw their velvet caps and cloaks, which are still used at such times, and are just the same, we were told, that their senators wore centuries ago. The Gonfaloniere's cap is decorated with a mixed plume of black and white feathers, (not looking, in the least, crest-fallen,) fastened by a silver band.

Our guide pointed out to us the palace of the tyrant, Pandolphi Petrucci, who was governor

of Sienna, and basely betrayed its interests to the Florentines.

On the whole, we liked Sienna extremely. It is a cheerful, cleanly, handsome town ; and we were not surprised to see a notice in our hotel of there being a Protestant English place of worship. I believe that many of our compatriots find Sienna an agreeable place of summer residence. It is situated on the side of a mountain. Water is brought to it, from a distance of five miles, by an aqueduct.

The country between Sienna and Florence is very pretty, hilly, and well cultivated. As we approached the latter city, we saw it embosomed in wooded hills, looking magnificent, its spires and domes brightened by the setting sun. The numberless villas on the adjacent rising grounds partook, with the gently winding Arno, of the general illumination ; and, set off by the fine dark cypress, and the sombre tints of the olive trees contrasting with the bright verdure of the vineyards, the landscape was one of the very finest I ever saw.

LETTER XXVII.

Florence.

It certainly is a great drawback from the beauty of London that our fine river does not flow through the quarter ornamented by such a succession of noble parks and squares, which, as far as I know, are not equalled in any other city. If the Thames pursued its course amongst them, London would be, in my opinion, a city "ce qu'il n'y en a point." What would Paris be without the Seine, and Florence without the Arno, or, which would be pretty much the same as regards beauty, if they were but to be seen in our occasional visits to a place where only those reside who are too busy to mind any save industrious pursuits? The grand embellishments of a city,

a river crossed by beautiful bridges, we possess, 'tis true; but these are never seen by us of the western hemisphere, unless on some very particular occasion, when an expedition to "the city" is announced, on the eve of the event (if not earlier) as about to take place, with no less emphasis than a visit to the continent is spoken of, now that we are puffed about the world by steam, like feathers driven before the wind, and that Imogen's query no longer seems strange or impatient as to "how many score of miles may we well ride 'twixt hour and hour?" I sometimes hear a thoughtful matron say to her daughters, "You must not keep the horses out long to-day, for I am to go to-morrow into the city, at an early hour, to show your lately-arrived cousins the Tower and the bridges," &c. &c. In this way it is that our most beautiful bridges are seen, once or so in every body's life; but here in Florence, as well as in Paris, they are continually before all eyes, forming a centre towards which the

diverging parts of those cities tend, as to a point of universal attraction. However, as we know ourselves to be (so fate decrees) the envy of surrounding nations, it is perhaps as well that evil passion should not be increased by our "Queen of Cities" combining all possible excellences. My regret, however, that old Father Thames does not frequent our haunts is controlled by the recollection of how much more good is effected by his presence in his actual locale, than if he merely contributed to the embellishment of the walks and drives of a portion of the community, many of whom suffer already from "*l'embarras des richesses.*"

Florence is certainly not to be compared in beauty to the "royal syren," Naples, nor in grandeur to "the eternal city," the "Niobe of nations," but its own peculiar charms are very great. I have met somewhere an observation of Ariosto's, on seeing the hills around Florence so full of palaces and villas, that it appeared as if the soil produced them. "If thy palaces," said he, "which are thus dis-

persed, were concentrated within one wall, two Romes could not vie with thee." And such as the poet described the environs of Florence centuries ago, they are now. The surrounding highly cultivated hills in all directions are studded with bright, gay looking palaces and villas, which are to the city like an encircling zone closely set with gems.

Firenze, translated by us Florence, is an Etruscan word that signifies *Red Lily*, which is the arms of the city, and the gay device is suited to the cheerful, happy aspect of the place and its neighbourhood, where (in the environs) a thriving, contented peasantry flourish, whose prosperity and industry would render Florence an enviable residence, even if it did not deserve the appellation given to it of "the Athens of Italy." Here a lover of the arts may revel and feast, and still find pleasures to satisfy his taste for ever; for Florence contains treasures for the enjoyment of a virtuoso that a whole life could scarcely exhaust.

The Laurentian gallery, called so after Lo-

renzo de Medici, is nothing like so grand as the galleries of the Vatican ; but in some respects it is more enjoyable. In the Vatican a long and wearisome trajet must be made, where only fragments of ancient inscriptions laid along the wall, meet the inquiring eye ; which, in my case, was almost set watering, because of my lack of knowledge to understand them, for there I could not even find " sermons in stones," and I was dispirited by the time I got to a series of rooms and galleries filled with the finest statues in the world.

If the fatigued limbs will admit of further pursuit, the open porticoes, called the Loggie of Raffaelle, may be visited, where the decay of beauty is too apparent ; the once glowing tints imparted by a rich and awakened fancy are fast fading away, vanishing like the hues of the rainbow that leave no trace behind ; excepting the Loggie and the rooms painted in fresco,— which latter are far more magnificent, I think, than the two celebrated chapels, the Pauline and the Sistine, so remarkable for containing

Michael Angelo's last judgment,—there are not any vast number of paintings in the Vatican, I mean of detached oil paintings, but of those the greater part are *chefs-d'œuvre*, placed in large unfurnished, unornamented rooms, and, as I well recollect, not a seat is to be found which would admit of one's taking “long, lingering looks” at such unrivalled excellence. A morning at the Vatican, however much it informed my mind, always pretty well exhausted its poor companion, my body.

To compare the Laurentian gallery with the Vatican would be absurd, but every one must feel the latter to be a most enjoyable place, *pour passer le temps*; fine works of art are here so concentrated; and not a single yard, (the stair-case excepted,) that is not richly adorned. The two galleries, which run parallel, are of great length, have ancient statues and busts on either side, and the walls, (where windows do not interfere,) are covered with pictures, for the most part of merit; but some of them, it must be admitted, are inferior,

and might be removed with advantage. The ceiling is not high, and at intervals is crossed by beams; the compartments into which it is divided, are coved and painted most beautifully in arabesque patterns, so that persons walking through the galleries can enjoy, perfectly well and easily, the fruits of the artist's labours; whereas, in general, the paintings on ceilings require such painful exertion to look at, that they are not dwelt upon with the same pleasure as other paintings of equal merit, by such of us as have not necks resembling the cameleopard, to which class mine, unfortunately, does not belong. Besides these two galleries, there are a great number of rooms containing statues, and pictures of the very highest order, also bronzes, and gems, all made well known to the world by writers competent to describe them. Two large rooms are appropriated to the portraits of painters mostly executed by themselves. The effect produced is not good by such a large assembly of the gentlemen of the brush in "sober livery clad," and in fact, I thought it was something

like taking a peep into a prison, when I first put my head within their precincts ; many of the best painters and most interesting personages are placed so high, as to be quite out of the pale of society. Now if those were removed from the upper regions, where they are in a great measure lost, and put in the gallery to replace some pictures that might advantageously be discarded ; the improvement, I think, would be great in both departments.

In the Pitti Palace, where the Grand Duke resides, (as also did the Medici,) there is an unrivalled collection of paintings, all flowers and no weeds. Every day in the week, Sunday excepted, the Grand Duke allows the public to have the entrée into the immense suite of rooms which, besides containing, perhaps, the finest collections of paintings in Italy (exclusive of fresco paintings) are most superbly furnished : to see the Mosaic tables alone is worth a pilgrimage from distant lands. As the Grand Duke and his family are necessarily excluded, until a late hour in the day, from those rooms that are

opened to the public, his making such a sacrifice is a remarkable proof of kindness; indeed he is an object of universal attachment to his subjects, who appear to be a fortunate class of people, treated well, and watched over by a mild, tolerant, and vigilant government. It puzzles me to say why the papal dominions do not exhibit equal signs of prosperity. The popes, who are elective sovereigns, have pretty generally enriched their respective families; and the wealth flowing into such constantly new channels, might be supposed to become so many conduits for its diffusion over the country at large; which, however, is not fertilized by it, like Tuscany; in the Roman states it remains apparently stagnant, attached to some few great names. I suppose much of the evil lies in the immensely too great proportion of the clerical body, of monks especially, to the rest of the population, for they are so many consumers of the fruits of the earth, without being producers. The great law of providence, that man must live by the sweat of his brow, cannot be defeated

with impunity; and it must also be taken into consideration that the malaria that prevails in so great a part of the Roman territory, acts with baleful influence on the pursuits of agriculture, as well as on those of general industry.

The cathedral in all ancient cities is, generally speaking, the very Corypheus of the buildings therein; having been erected at a period when it was commonly believed that the founding and raising such edifices secured the salvation of all concerned. The cathedral here is of great dimensions, and, on the outside, of most laborious workmanship—but it is internally “less elaborate.”* The outside is composed of black and white marble, inlaid with minute and curious delicacy: it looks as though a fine ebony and ivory cabinet had been manufactured contemporaneously with the building of the ark, and that it ever since had been pro-

* There is a statue of Brunellesco, the chief architect of the cathedral, placed at a short distance from it, just where he was accustomed to stand, first to survey the progress of the building, and afterwards to admire it.

gressing in size until it arrived at its present ample development. — If some such gradual enlargement did not actually take place, it is difficult to imagine how men could have seriously undertaken to accomplish a structure of such vast proportions, by means so minute as are commonly only employed for the fabrication of works on a diminutive scale. It might be the conception of a giant, executed by a worker of Mosaic. But as a most petty animal raises mounds of coral that become islands where trees grow, and men's abodes are founded, it is vain to wonder at what animals of our own species, or those of any other, can effect.

The cathedral is simple within, and so little adorned, as to give a momentary impression that it has been turned inside out, as it reverses the usual order of things, by its internal plainness. The windows are composed of the most brilliant ancient glass, but they ought to be more than double their present size to suit their situation.

A memorable event in ecclesiastical history

took place here ; in this cathedral the celebrated Council assembled, composed of a Greek emperor, and the Greek patriarchs, together with the Roman pontiff and his prelates. Those two ancient portions of the christian world met as a united body in this church for the last time : not long afterwards, the schism ensued, which separated them probably for ever. The Romans refused to obey the emperor's injunctions, who, being himself Pontifex Maximus, considered his ecclesiastical authority paramount. The christian emperors having succeeded to the rights and honours of the pagan sovereigns in that particular, from the times of Constantine, the emperor and the Eastern patriarchs considered themselves entitled, by virtue of his being head of the church, to condemn some doctrines deemed by them unwarranted, that were maintained by the western division ; which, however, would not be so dictated to, and it threw off the emperor's yoke, and became independent of his authority. Ever since that period, not

with very logical precision, I think, the western or Roman Catholic half of the divided church, claims to be the whole and universal—and boasts of its entire unity and indivisibility—"one faith," &c.; whilst no doubt the other and eastern half asserts its prior right to the title of *the Catholic Church*; not taking into account the like pretensions of their brethren of the west, whom, I conclude, from analogy, they consider no better than backsliding dissenters—for men are too prone ever to condemn with harsh feelings all religious opinions differing from their own. It is, however, well for us that there is one infallible Judge over all, who will in due time impart to us knowledge that will set at rest and compose our angry passions. In the meantime, the differing denominations of Christians will doubtless continue resolutely to hold one another, as they have done for centuries, in what each considers a virtuous abhorrence warranted and approved by Scripture. But notwithstanding external divisions, Christ's church is at unity in itself, for his faithful followers—

those who serve him in spirit and in truth—
are to be found amongst all denominations of
Christians.

The next most remarkable church to the cathedral in Florence, is that of Santa Croce, in whose holy precincts lie

“ Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality.”

It is a plain solemn building, and well adapted for the display of the fine monuments it contains. They stand on either side the whole length of the centre aisle, and are placed in recesses of grey stone, that show off the sculpture of the white marble of which they are composed to great advantage.

“ Here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes,
Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.”

There are besides, many other churches adorned with some of the finest works of the ancient masters, both in sculpture and painting, of all which there are many minute accounts carefully drawn up.

There is no city of importance, with which I am acquainted, that appears to have been so stationary as Florence, excepting as regards the population—whilst other cities have decayed, either wholly or partially, or have been enlarged or aggrandised, or dwindled, Florence has preserved the same appearance it must have worn during the three or four last centuries. The palaces, many of the houses, and all the public buildings, are composed of massive blocks of roughly-hewn stone which look as if giants had been their fabricators. In the former the descendants of the old families are found frequently to reside, and the public affairs in most instances are carried on in the noble edifices originally appropriated to them in the days of the republic.

In the “Via Ghibelina,” we were allowed to see the mansion of the Buonarotti family. It is inhabited by a collateral branch of that of Michael Angelo. It was his own house in which he resided, and was left by him to one of his nephews, whose descendants are the pre-

sent occupants. The principal room is very finely painted, setting forth, in compartments, the leading and most honourable events of the life of Michael Angelo; the ceiling also contributes to the same purpose. Zuccherino, I think, was the painter, but I am very apt to forget names, if I do not happen to make some memorandum, and my pencil is sometimes forgotten. Adjoining is a room furnished just as when it was Michael Angelo's studio. There are many of his original drawings framed on the walls, and in a division of a long black oaken cabinet or press, we were shown on the shelves, the bottles with the remains of colours, and other materials of which he had made use; a closet, likewise, contains a few specimens of his modelling and sculpture. We were shown also into his *salle-à-manger*, along the upper part of the walls of which are painted in well-preserved fresco, nearly as large as life, and admirably well grouped, great numbers of the most distinguished poets, historians, artists, men of science and letters, that Italy had pro-

duced during part of, and preceding, the sixteenth century. Anachronisms of course are overlooked. Much interesting conversation was going forward between Petrarch and Dante, to judge by their speaking countenances; and Boccaccio was found apparently very amusing by his associates. It is an excellent idea, I think, for those who can afford to execute such a design in the best manner, to bring around them in the same room, grouped in a natural, easy conversational way, the portraits of men and women who are valued or admired, instead of having them detached, gazing on vacancy, or simpering on roses, like sign-posts that no longer serve their intended purpose of swinging in mid air.

There are, to speak of minor things, on one of the tables, several of Michael Angelo's very handsome enamelled plates and dishes, with his coat of arms in the centre; for although he did not derive his dignity from ancestry, he was not, apparently, indifferent to its value. We had the honour of holding his cane and slippers

in our hands ; they are preserved by his family with the tenderness that belongs to precious relics. I sat in an old arm-chair in his studio, the furniture of which has undergone no change whatever. On the whole, our visit was highly interesting, to the house of a citizen of whom Florence is so justly proud. Michael Angelo died in Rome, and his townsmen stole his body and brought it to his native place, indignant at the idea that it should be deposited anywhere else.

Although Florence, in externals, has remained stationary, a vast change, in some particulars, has come over the spirit of its mind, for citizens whom it banished and persecuted, are now its pride and boast, and *vice versa*. Dante, condemned and outraged while living, has become the idol of his countrymen. He was indeed offered permission to return, if he would, in the guise of penitence, publicly in the cathedral make an acknowledgment of his misdeeds ; but though he loved his home intensely, and languished to come back, he loved his honour

more, and spurned the offer with disdain. He died broken-hearted in Ravenna. The Florentines have often sought in vain to obtain his remains ; and not succeeding in their petitions for them, they placed, several years after his death, a picture of him, done by Orcagna, where it receives due honours, in the same cathedral to which he was summoned to appear as a guilty penitent. In the church of Santa Croce, a magnificent monument has been erected to his memory, the work of Canova. A female figure, whose crown is surmounted by a star, represents Italy ; she is pointing proudly to his bust. The drapery on this allegorical personage was thought by some to be too heavy, and a wit wrote upon it the following epigram :

“ Canova questa volta, l’ ha sbagliata,
Fe l’ Italia vestita, ed è’ spogliata.”

It was long a subject of regret that no portrait of Italy’s great bard, (as it has been amongst us with respect to our own Shakspeare,) was taken during his life, but within the last year one has been found, together with many other

portraits, in an apartment of one of the public buildings, painted in fresco. From the appearance of the whole, it bespeaks a connexion with some passage in the history of Florence. In this picture, which is due to the genius of Giotto, the poet appears holding in his hand a branch of pomegranates : he is represented as young and handsome—handsomer certainly as a Guelph than afterwards as a Ghibeline,—but the features are evidently the same as were at a later period drawn from recollection, when grief and indignation had done their work, harrowed up his soul, and left deep traces on his haggard countenance.

This interesting picture was covered over, probably owing to party-spirit desiring to obliterate his memory and that of others who acted with him ; and until very lately it was unknown. The walls of the apartment requiring repair, their coating was removed, and the treasure hid beneath was discovered. Thus the world has made the acquisition of a well-executed portrait of the dignified, graceful, and

spirited, youthful Dante. Copies of it were eagerly sought for, and are now to be seen in every direction. We had some difficulty in getting access to this valuable picture—as the room that contains it, just now is in the hands of workmen. We were told that artists are to be employed in restoring the paintings that surround it, as far as possible, and their labours will perhaps elucidate the circumstances to which its origin may be referred.

Our next visit was to the tower called “il bel Sguardo.” The country around Florence, and all its undulating hills that rise “in gay thetic pride,” are seen from thence to great advantage, but it is rendered famous by one who was not engrossed by things of earth, for there, principally, Galileo made those observations that led to the enlightenment of the world and to his own direful persecution. His sister’s house was adjoining, to which he was at one time restricted, and where Milton, who paid him several visits, doubtless gave and received pleasure (being “at once indebted and discharged”) such

as ranks amongst the highest enjoyments this world affords, and he did Galileo the honour of alluding to him thus in his immortal poem—

. “ Like the moon whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fésolé,
As in Val d'Arno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.”

Galileo's monument and bust also adorn Santa Croce, and an inscription on the former, eulogises in a high strain him, who was once reviled and contemned; but “the whirligig of time” brings about great changes, and Florence, not satisfied with conferring on him monumental praise, has erected a beautiful circular building attached to the chief literary and scientific institution of the city, where the united powers of painting, sculpture, and architecture are employed to do honour to the “starry Galileo.” It reminds one of a temple, such as in the olden time was dedicated to some presiding deity. His statue is there “alone in its glory;” around it in different compartments are placed scientific

instruments of every kind that he either used, or fond credulity supposes that he did : globes, glasses, telescopes, and all other appliances. I much doubt, however, the persecuted old man's having had such a goodly apparatus as now purport to have belonged to him. It is said that "*coming events cast their shadows before*," but I dare say that no prophetic vision lighted up his prison's gloom, intimating the homage that a revolving world (though he knew it to be a changing body) would, in future ages, offer at his shrine.

Had Galileo lived in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, there is little reason to doubt that great man would have supported and upheld him—though it is by no means clear that Dante, who was a politician, and might have interfered with his purposes, would have been equally fortunate in sharing his favours, had he been his contemporary. Lorenzo was the generous, enlightened, patron of literature, and of the arts and sciences. The disputed movement of the heavenly bodies, or of any bodies, not of "Eu-

ropean reputation," would have been viewed by him with no unfriendly eye. He would have placed his protecting *Ægis* before the philosopher, allowed him to speculate on the firmament as he pleased, and have screened him from the power of his enemies. Lorenzo had no weak fears with regard to science, which his mind must have recognised as being neither more nor less than progress made, or making, towards a goal never to be attained by man—the full knowledge of the laws of nature.

The character of Lorenzo has been viewed very differently at different times: he was at first the idol of his countrymen, and, afterwards, I believe, for a season, unjustly decried. Historians, too, have enlisted themselves on different sides, each endeavouring to establish his own opinion, and have contested as warmly for and against the excellence of his character as Hector and Achilles fought for the body of Patroclus.

Mr. Roscoe's beautiful piece of biography, "the Life of Lorenzo de Medici," first revived

the love of Italian literature in England fifty years ago, and which was thus noticed by an accomplished writer of the same period, Mr. Mathias, the author of "The Pursuits of Literature,"

" But, hark ; what solemn strains from Arno's vales
Breathe raptures wafted on the Tuscan gales !
Lorenzo rears again his awful head,
And feels his ancient glories round him spread ;
The Muses, starting from their trance, revive,
And at their Roscoe's bidding wake and live."

Amidst various professional avocations, (Mr. Roscoe was an eminent banker,) he employed his leisure hours in making known to the generality of his countrymen (a taste for Italian literature had previously lain dormant amongst us) the achievements of the indefatigable patrons of learning of the house of Medici, of Cosmo, surnamed *Pater Patriæ*, and of his grandson and great-grandson, Lorenzo and the Pope Leo X. He has, perhaps, dwelt too enthusiastically on the benefits they conferred on mankind in forwarding the revival of learning,

and in promoting the cultivation of the arts and sciences, and also, it may be, that he viewed with too unreserved admiration the astonishing power of Lorenzo's mind, which mainly contributed to raise Florence to a degree of political consideration and independence, which obtained for him almost unbounded sway over his countrymen, in the commanding influence he exercised.

Monsieur Sismondi, who wrote the History of the Italian Republics since Roscoe's works were published, detected the germs of the evils that afterwards befel Florence, and he laid to Lorenzo's charge the fixed determination of subverting the civil freedom of his country, and of erecting his dynasty on its ruins; and to his desire to attain such objects, and to his purpose of making his compatriots more willing slaves, are attributed his lavish expenditure in enriching Florence with works of art and literature, &c. His gifts were thought to be suspicious (like those of the Greeks) even by some of his contemporaries; amongst others,

the enlightened monk, Savonarola, who tried in vain to counteract what he conceived to be their evil effects ; and certainly the princely power and prerogatives attained by the paltry successors of Lorenzo, (who rose on his greatness,) with respect to the government of Florence, countenance Sismondi's view of the subject. At the same time, we should in candour remember that Lorenzo was cut off in the prime of life, and that it is like prejudging a man to determine what would be his course of action, when it may be that his projects are only half formed ; had Washington died whilst fighting for the independence of America, motives of personal ambition might possibly have been attributed to him, who rose above such considerations far as the eagle soars beyond the level of this earth.

As citizens, the Medici were great and deserving all honour (putting the foregoing imputation out of the question). As princes, with the exception of the two popes, and perhaps one or two other members of the family,

they merit only contempt and obloquy. I found this opinion in a single instance as it were corroborated oddly enough by the bust of Lorenzo, placed at the outside of the Laurentian gallery. The countenance is manly, powerful, and simple; and at no great distance is another bust of a Duke Gaston de Medici, in a long flowing wig, (the model for which might have been given by the perruquier of Louis Quatorze,) that adorns features expressive of the acme of folly and vanity. If the ambitious purposes attributed to Lorenzo were indeed entertained by him, he was, like "the foremost man of all the world," Julius Cæsar, cut off in the midst of his ripening fortunes. He died at the early age of forty-four.

We went to see his favourite villa called Careggi, which had been that of his grandfather Cosmo also. It is about four miles from Florence; we sat in the room where he drew his last breath—the same in which Cosmo expired. The villa is a square, plain, substantial building; an open court is in the centre; it

contains only one large room on the second and principal floor—a sort of hall where tradition says, the Platonic Society used to assemble, and form plans for the stately edifices by which Lorenzo benefited and embellished his country. In the upper story is a long gallery that commands a most extensive view, as indeed do all the apartments. The house stands on an eminence; on one side is a magnificent view of Florence, and on the other opens a wide prospect of the Val d'Arno; all around rise hills highly cultivated, and the site of innumerable good farm-houses and handsome villas; altogether the view from the windows is bright, cheerful, and animated in no ordinary degree. The entrance to the house is near the road, and opposite to it a gate leads into a pretty and not very large garden. On the whole, Careggi is a delightful residence, of moderate size, substantial and well built, but exhibiting nothing splendid nor unsuited to the expenditure of two or three thousand a year. The fine arts have done nothing for its decoration excepting that

one apartment, half surrounded by pillars, and an open portico, has the ceiling finely painted : that room is next to a smaller one made use of by Lorenzo as a *cabinet de travail*, which latter opens into the bedroom where he died.

Mr. Roscoe, in his Life of Lorenzo, has given a full and interesting account of his last moments, and has described the anguish and distress exhibited by all classes of persons in Florence, when his death was announced. Several of his friends, previously to that event, had watched and wept around his couch—Lorenzo only was calm. Unfortunately for them, he had been put into the hands of a physician who relied upon the efficacy of pounded pearls, (perhaps that which Cleopatra dissolved in wine was taken by her as we take a Seidlitz powder,) and the dust of emeralds, along with other medicaments, were used to remove his disorder, which of course was aggravated by such means. In a whole state, they may, perchance, allay a fever of vanity; but, in the way they were administered to him, they must have

been worse than useless. A doctor of great repute from Padua was his chief physician; it seems this sagacious gentleman had had his nativity cast at a period when his services were in great demand in his native town, and also at Venice; and having been informed that he should be drowned, he dreaded his frequent visits to the last-named city, and to make sure of escaping a watery grave he removed to Florence. He was with Lorenzo when he died, and some of the attendants, believing he had been ill-treated, and frantic with grief, seized on the doctor, and threw him (wig, cane, and all) into a *well* more than a hundred feet deep, which well is still in the courtyard. I looked down it, and shuddered when I thought how the poor Leech had verified the prediction he tried to defeat, and to his cost, according to the old adage, found Truth in a well, at the same time that he met

"Th' unerring stroke of Heaven-directed destiny."

All future residents at Careggi, it is said, have benefited in one respect by the manner

of the Paduan's exit, for his removal from his temporary tomb (where he was stuck like a toad in a hole) caused such a discharge to be made of all obnoxious matter along with himself, that the water, ever since, has been remarkable for its brightness and purity. He effected the purification of the well as a goose does that of a chimney, when (as I have heard related) it is cruelly driven down, for the purpose of giving it a cleansing.

LETTER XXVIII.

Bologna.

WE left Florence on the 20th of May, and although the season was verging on summer, we could not possibly have had more delightful weather for travelling; even the middle of the day was not too warm. Our road lay amongst the Apennines, which formed an endless variety of combinations of beautiful scenery, all clothed in the gayest apparel; luxuriant wild flowers, and banks of purple thyme, were spread far and near, the latter, like Scotland's heather, enriching the foreground, and occasionally contrasting it with the sterile rocks that rose above, grouped in fantastic shapes, or which, boldly massive, seemed to preclude access even to the bounding goat, that adventurous lover of craggy steeps.

We remarked some excellent, handsome, and quite modern houses, in the midst of these Italian highlands, many miles distant from Florence, from which it would appear that at least temporary residence on their estates is becoming more frequent than it was formerly amongst the great landed proprietors of Tuscany. We were told by an English gentleman, of large landed property, who has been settled in the neighbourhood of Florence for twenty years, that the most happy intercourse invariably subsists between the landlord and tenant, when a Fattore is not employed to oppress and pillage the one, and cheat and deceive the other. The arrangement between them is that they divide the fruits of the soil. He said that many of his acquaintances who used to employ Fattori or agents, now manage and superintend their own estates, and have thereby benefited themselves and their tenants so obviously, that the laudable practice is becoming more general than formerly; and it would make a most important change for the better in society in Italy, if the

healthful, manly pursuits of a country life were generally adopted by persons of fortune, instead of the idle engagements of cities for those who can take no part in the government, and whose leading occupation is to kill time; unless they happen to be men who make the interests of science and learning the business of their lives; and such are rarely found, I believe, in any country amongst the higher ranks who are without the great stimulus, the desire to improve their condition, that urges forward others placed by fortune in a different and lower position. Were the favoured class merely to visit the cities, and seldom make them their permanent places of abode, it would tend greatly to the welfare of all parties.

Cardinal Richelieu broke down the power of the French nobility, and to effect it drew them, by various schemes and devices, to reside wholly in Paris, in order that the monarch might become despotic, and the people prostrate. In the following reign it was considered a mark of disrespect to the king, if noblemen were volun-

tarily absent from his court. On the other hand, it was felt to be a direful disgrace and misfortune, when their sovereign desired any of them to leave its precincts and retire to their estates in the country even for a short interval; so completely had Richelieu's machinations taken effect in subduing and rendering servile the high-spirited nobility of France; whose chivalrous feelings, which could not be altogether extinguished, found vent in continual wars; which, after some time, proved unsuccessful, and the monarchy was shaken to its foundation. The latter years of the "Grand Monarque" were as dark and sombre as the previous ones had been dazzling in their splendour. At length the French revolution was the remote though certain consequence of the deep-laid design of the astute, but one-sided politician, whose artifices and blandishments enticed from the country to the capital the natural guardians and protectors of the people, and had thus broken the tie, rude and harsh as it was for the latter, that bound them together. The despised

and despoiled people, no longer bearing any attachment to their rulers, rose in their might, and, Samson-like, shook the pillars of the constitution, and brought down the whole fabric, crushing all in a common ruin.

In a well-balanced government like ours, the nobility share the interests of the people for weal or woe, and though they possess some privileges, they are not placed apart by any distinct laws and usages as they were in France, but are like the decorated capital of the Corinthian pillar, that, resting on a firm basis, supports the architrave or crowning portion of the edifice of the constitution.

We made our arrangements to pass the night at Pietra Mala, where we arrived in sufficient time to walk a mile over very rugged ground amongst the mountains, to see a most curious phenomenon—flame bursting out of the earth. It appears on the surface of a small mount, on which there are two little pools of water, and in forty or fifty places, or perhaps more, there are distinct flames proceeding from the earth; in

one part several are burning collectively together, as if a large body of shavings were in full blaze. The flames rise about a foot from the ground. Our guide told us that when it rains or snows, the flames increase frequently to six feet; and their height of course is greater in winter, being in proportion to the wetness of the season, but that the flames are always more or less visible.

Philosophers, I believe, are much puzzled to account for such an extraordinary appearance: some call it electric, some volcanic, and others phosphoric. But there are circumstances that contradict each and all such conjectures, and leave the cause unexplored. As Hamlet says,

“ There are more things in Heaven and Earth
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.”

Some of our party, who had mounted to the top of Vesuvius, to look into Vulcan's forge, had only observed dimness and smoke, whilst here were flames issuing from the earth but a little apart from grass and flowers, and attended

with scarcely any smoke at all. How constantly it happens on a large scale throughout our lives that in what we expect to find we are disappointed, and *vice versa*!

Our guide told us that at two or three miles distance, there is more of the same kind of fire proceeding from the ground. We gathered after the manner of a set of gypsies around the cheering blaze, and looked, I suppose, not unlike those poor wanderers when making their preparations for the night, in the midst of the mountain's cold and dreariness. At length, not to resemble too closely stragglers belonging to that mysterious race who "love not the world, nor the world's laws," we turned our steps towards our *auberge*, and a most delightful walk we found it. The sun was just setting, and deep shadows were falling around; whilst some patches of green maize, that did not come within the influence of the deepening gloom, were of emerald brightness. Gushing rills from all directions chimed in with the cuckoo's note,

(heard by us for the first time this year,) and the sounds of the vesper-bell, proceeding from a little church at no great distance, were borne towards us by the breeze sometimes strongly, and then with fainter cadence.

Our conversation respecting the wonderful fires we had been viewing was suspended, that we might give ourselves up to the impressions, so vivid and so charming, of that twilight hour.

As we approached our little inn, we saw, standing beneath a rude porch, one of the finest figures I ever beheld—an elderly Jew, whose long and perfectly white beard came almost to his girdle. His countenance was handsome, thoughtful, and solemn; his dress showed he was a traveller, but in order, if possible, to hear something about him, I inquired if he lived at one of the few houses at Pietra Mala. I was told he does not reside there—that he had only just arrived, and that he was a merchant going to Florence; and my informer added, looking askance at him, “*Non è Cristiano.*” He stood, leaning on his staff, solitary and aloof, as

one that had no fellowship with those around him. He brought to my recollection Sir Walter Scott's description of the Jew in Ivanhoe, so I came to the conclusion, that if he has a daughter she must be like Rebecca ; and I thought with satisfaction, that in toiling for her, he had not, in the improved state of the world, to dread the ills his race once encountered. I saw no more of the patriarchal and dignified-looking Jew, whose likeness a sculptor or a painter might have been glad of to represent as the father of the faithful.

We set off at an early hour the next morning ; our road still lay through the Apennines, and the scenery continued grand and beautiful the whole way to Bologna, where we arrived about three o'clock. The bright, cheerful appearance of this city surprised us ; knowing it to be very ancient, we expected to see some demonstrations of decay, but none are observable, though there are many parts of it of an extreme degree of antique richness. The square in which the very ancient church of St. Petronius

stands, where the Emperor Charles V. was crowned, he might have mistaken for a portion of his favourite city of Ghent. The Town Hall, which is opposite to the church, is also very like one of the highly ornamented buildings of the Netherlands. Along each side of nearly all the streets run open-pillared arcades, the effect of which, both near and in the distance, whether seen in a direct line or in angles, is highly picturesque and ornamental, as well as affording invaluable shade in summer, and shelter in winter. The whole of the city, in every part, is so strikingly cleanly, that I should not be surprised if the scavengers of Bologna were, amongst future improvements, to have their services called for in every great city of Italy, as the natives of Estramadura have the carriage of water wholly consigned to them at Madrid.

* * * *

We stayed two days at Bologna, and found interesting occupation for every hour. A sitting-room adjoining to ours at the Hotel

Pélérin was Lord Byron's when he paid visits at different times to Bologna; the last was nearly of two months' duration. Our waiter had attended on him, and was evidently proud of the circumstance. He said that his lordship wrote every morning until two o'clock, and then he went out to ride or drive; he ate scarcely anything but bread, and vegetables *au naturel*; he drank only foreign wine. His evenings were regularly passed at the Count de G——'s, who had just previously got a palace in Bologna. That old gentleman, the communicative servant said, was "un Avaro," and that money might purchase from him any of his possessions, though he was very rich, and had only one daughter, besides two illegitimate children, to provide for. His fortune is now being consumed by law expenses, if what we were told at Rome be true, that he had left nearly all his large accumulations to a natural son, who induced the legitimate daughter, by his father's first wife, to forego for a sum of money her rights, but that immediately afterwards the

widow, the celebrated Countess G——, set up her claims to the fortune to which she could not possibly have had any, but that the step-daughter had voluntarily resigned her pretensions. The suit is now pending in Rome. A good portion of the count's money will no doubt be enjoyed (perhaps the whole of the oyster) by the ecclesiastical lawyers, and probably an equal partition be made of the shells between the rival candidates.

On the ceiling of Lord Byron's sitting-room at the Pélérin, are two very pretty landscapes that he had painted. Query, was it that his eye, when "in a fine frenzy rolling," might rest upon scenes of calm loveliness, and his troubled soul thence imbibe peace, to which it was too often a stranger? Or (which is more probable) did he want an excuse to help some poor artist, and, as it were, "do good by stealth;" at least under a feigned pretence of requiring some such aid to his imagination?

The civil wars of Italy have left conspicuous remains in Bologna; some in characters that

are seen, as it were, traced against the sky. Several lofty towers were built by rival barons. They are, for about the distance of forty or fifty feet from the ground, based on more extended buildings, from whence they rise to a considerable height, of a very narrow square form. One of them, erected by some of the Asinelli, (a very numerous family,) is one of the most striking objects I ever beheld ; its height, by actual measurement, I do not know ; but according to my impression it is more lofty than any building the world has seen since the Tower of Babel, of which edifice I fancied I had a vision when I attempted to descry its summit, and also of the effects actually taking place of the judgment passed on that renowned normal school of languages ; for the tower of the Asinelli is greatly out of the perpendicular, and at the first view gives an awful impression that the moment of its disruption has arrived ; and seen as it is, in conjunction with another tower of the same description, taking an equally oblique, though different direction, the effect

produced is startling, and anything but composing to the nerves. I should think an abode near the centre of Vesuvius about as safe and pleasant as one in the line that those "cloud capped towers" plainly demonstrate their intention of pursuing, when their present most apparent inclination towards the earth is matured. But no apprehension of any kind with respect to them is felt by persons most immediately concerned, judging from the numerous houses surrounding them in all directions.

The inhabitants of Bologna have in their Campo Santo outside the walls, the most pleasing "last home" that I have ever seen. A large piece of ground is planted and divided into squares by pillared colonnades, open on one side. That which is solid wall contains monuments. In certain divisions these are required to be composed of marble; but other equally good situations are allotted for persons whose successors cannot afford to fulfil that condition. There are many beautiful architectural compartments that break the otherwise uniformity

of continued colonnades, and the whole establishment is attached to an ancient handsome church, which admitted in its neighbourhood sufficient space for the Campo Santo to be placed in the beginning of the present century. That “city of the dead” seems wonderfully filled, considering the short period of its duration. Young’s expression occurred to me—“ How populous the grave !”

From the Campo Santo continues an unbroken series of open arcades to the foot of a mountain, on the top of which is a church, held in great repute. It is said to contain an original picture of the Madonna by Saint Luke; but it is whispered amongst irreverent connoisseurs that he was by no means so good a painter as he was an evangelist. Another line of arcades goes direct from Bologna, and the two unite in one colonnade, which is continued for the distance of three miles up to the church. It cannot be approached otherwise than on foot, so in order that no weather may impede the devout from visiting it, a long continuous

building, covered, and consisting of a solid wall on one side, and pillars at intervals on the other, has been constructed in a great measure, if not wholly, by private munificence. Rich families undertook to build several arches; poorer persons added one to the number, and the poorest gave their labour gratis; all who possibly could, by any means, added a link to the chain, fondly believing it would, like Jacob's ladder, connect earth with heaven; and thus has been achieved a great work, resembling in some points an aqueduct, of which it has somewhat the appearance.

The Apennines have deposited some of their lesser appendages on one side of Bologna, where beautiful green hills are seen rising above the rude, flat extended plains of Lombardy. On another of those hills or mountains stands the ancient convent of "St. Michele in Bosco." It is of vast dimensions, and was formerly occupied by men of noble families, who there had a residence, not surpassed, generally speaking, by their paternal homes. The long

decorated galleries and cloisters, with their adjoining chambers, now stand open and vacant. The ceiling of the grand library is superbly painted by Canuta, but the paintings on the walls were more than half of them defaced by the prisoners confined there by order of the French, during the period of their occupation of Bologna in 1798 and 99. Some few other decorated ceilings of this building have escaped the destruction which has befallen the fine fresco paintings by Guido and the Caracci, that ornamented the walls of a half-open portico, entirely surrounding a flower-garden. Those fine paintings are much scrawled over, and otherwise injured; but they seem capable of being in a degree restored.

The Custode has the good taste still to cultivate a few common flowers where probably once grew only what were rich and rare; but the exhilarating water that was sent forth for their refreshment from a beautiful central fountain, no longer issues thence; it abstains from its destined purpose like the sun-dial, which in

cloudy weather is a nonentity, and will only tell of bright hours.

The convent, which is of immense extent, is kept in repair, and is not occupied in any way, excepting by the porter's family, who live in one of the small outer lodges. I suppose there is some reason for its not being appropriated to any useful purposes. We have more than once or twice, in travelling through Italy, observed ecclesiastical buildings kept in repair, although perfectly unoccupied. The magnificent church of the Certosa, and its numerous appendages of houses for monks, at about twenty miles distance from Milan, is in that state. The convent was suppressed by the Emperor Joseph II., and its funds alienated. But notwithstanding the whole establishment is unoccupied, (except that service is performed daily in the church,) it is kept in perfect repair. It may be this is done in the hope that pious and wealthy persons will restore such establishments to their former splendour.

Bologna was a republic, torn by dissensions

in the middle ages: and to prevent warring monarchs from making it a stake in the game they played at, the Bolognese placed themselves under the pope's jurisdiction, retaining, however, their free institutions, respecting which, if the pope's legate at any time attempted encroachments, he was compelled to desist or leave the city; and so matters continued until the French took possession of, and united it bona fide to the kingdom of Italy. A noble vision then seemed to wear a kingly crown, which mocked the hope of many a patriot bosom, as it vanished to be seen no more. After Napoleon's downfall, Bologna was restored to the Pope, who has since governed it with ampler powers than he previously possessed; it retains, however, some few more pretensions to liberty, the remnants of former habits of self-government, than are allowed to other cities under papal domination. A cardinal resides in Bologna, not merely as legate, but also as governor, though the latter appellation is not given to him. Perhaps the

people would reject him altogether if he called himself governor, while they acquiesce in his exercising the authority of one; so strangely are we often influenced by words. I dare say the inhabitants would rather die than resign their civic motto, "Liber," which the cardinal wisely offers no impediment to their flourishing wherever they please, and thus all parties seem contented for the present. Whether words will much longer continue to be taken for things, is another question.

The church of St. Petronius, the patron saint of Bologna, is very ancient. One half of the principal front at the outside is of extremely rich and fine Gothic architecture; the remaining half, though blackened by time, has never been finished. The inside is not remarkable, excepting that it is very large; and the same may be said of the cathedral, which latter, however, contains some fine pictures. To any one coming from Rome, who has fresh in memory the profusion of marbles embellishing the churches there, the absence of that

material in the churches at Bologna appears a striking want; a deficiency almost as unpleasing to the eye accustomed to their rich decoration as it is to see a tree without leaves in summer. Painting, however, has done much for the ornamenting the churches here, as indeed it has for many other of the public places.

The Bolognese school of painters did not fail to embellish their native city. At the ancient university, which was richly endowed by the Countess Matilda, (who was born a Princess of Lucca,) there are on the ceilings and walls many of the paintings of those great masters. The University of Bologna had long no rival in Italy,—(in later times, the Universities of Padua and Pisa rose to celebrity,)—as regarded its fame, and the number of its students; which latter now are about five hundred, not so many hundreds as it once reckoned thousands. Mr. Eustace attributed this falling off in a great measure to the increased number of seminaries of the same description. How

this may be I cannot tell, but it is allowed that Bologna possessed the oldest and noblest of those institutions in Italy, which, by the direction of their studies, turned men's minds to subjects of vital importance, and extended the influence of learning to the business of life. At this university were first introduced the degrees and insignia of Doctors and Bachelors, afterwards so generally adopted; and here Irnerius, a native of the city, opened, towards the beginning of the 12th century, the first law school, and began to expound the Pandects of Justinian, obtained by the Pisans, as I have already mentioned, in the dusty recesses of a convent at Amalfi. Bologna claims to itself the honour of a disciple of Irnerius (Vacarius, a Lombard) having been the first teacher of law in England. It must be owned that he had apt scholars, " who, knowing their rights, dared maintain them " against domestic and foreign tyranny, which, uniting, in vain attempted to withhold the charter of their liberties.

The old edifice pointed out to us as that in which the university flourished and obtained renown, must have been superbly decorated; but larger apartments were, strange to say, thought necessary towards the end of the last century, when it had greatly declined. A Count Marsigli having bequeathed to it his philosophical collections of different kinds, the professors, tutors, and pupils abandoned their old haunts, and located themselves in a great building, which they found nearly ready for their purpose, and now occupy; and altogether they somewhat resemble a man in a suit of clothes that is a great deal too large for him. Their new residence is destitute of the rich antique embellishments of their former "time-honoured" abode, which, however, seems to have been suffered to fall into decay for several years past. It is now undergoing repair and restoration, fortunately not alteration, and I was told it is again to be used for public purposes.

The library of this building is already put

into the finest condition. It is superb, perhaps more from its decoration than its architecture, and would be an ornament to any city. Over one of its many doors is inscribed, in large characters, the name of Carlo Borromeo, who was the legate at Bologna at one period, and a great benefactor to the university.

Connected with this university, there is, by-the-by, a circumstance deserving of notice,—several women have been among its most distinguished professors. The last of the tribe was a very handsome woman, judging from her bust and pictures—Clotilda Tambroni; she filled with great credit the Greek professor's chair until the time of her death, in 1817. She died at the age of fifty-two. Some years farther back, Lucia Morandi was professor of anatomy, and Laura Bassi of physics; and I was told that in more remote times (I make no doubt when the reputation of the University was at its height) other women contributed to its renown.

It would seem as if the Italian ladies have not all of them a mere mouthful of knowledge,

like certain other females of the present day, whom, however, they can surpass, when they choose to apply themselves to learning. But I must not forget that we have a Somerville, whom Cambridge or Oxford might be proud to enrol among their members.

Our time was too limited to allow of our going to many of the palaces, some of which contain extensive collections of paintings. The first we went to see was the gallery of the Count Zambecari. The pictures are numerous rather than select; some of them, however, are very fine. For one by Titian, of Charles V., we were told the Queen of England had offered a large sum of money. I would rather see it in Buckingham Palace than another in the same collection, by Giulio Romano, the wedding banquet of Henry VIII. and Anna Boleyn, in which the musicians are all attired as satyrs. What was the precise object of the painter in thus representing them, I cannot say; but certainly it was not to do honour to the royal Bluebeard, on whose right hand is seated the

fair bride, adorned like a victim. She had, unfortunately, no "good sister" to assist in rescuing her from the tyrant's axe,—one who was *called* a sister, on the contrary, promoted her destruction. The Maddalena in the desert, by Guercino, which is in the same collection, is a picture of most remarkable beauty. Another, of a very different kind, that interested me was the portrait of Clarice, the wife of Lorenzo de Medici. Truly she was an ill-favoured lady, though of most high birth and pretensions. As soon as I perceived her extremely plain features and sour visage, I understood at once why Mr. Roscoe, in his biography, took such pains to make out that his favourite Lorenzo was a good husband,—supposing it might be reasonably suspected he was otherwise. He certainly gave proof that he was a suffering one, when he resigned the society of his valued friend, Politiano, whom her peevishness made it necessary for him to banish from the familiar intercourse and social converse in which they mutually delighted. The picture of her son Gio-

vanni, afterwards Leo. X., in his cardinal's dress, at the age of fourteen, is by her side, and his eminence was certainly a very handsome boy, which one could hardly have supposed from his pictures in after life, when his full-blown honours and bloated cheeks were developed; even the pencil of Raffaelle at that period could not render his countenance agreeable.

During our too short stay we went several times to the justly famous public gallery of pictures. It is a most splendid collection of the works of Guido, the three Caracci, Domenichino, Guercino, and of some of their respective pupils. It can boast besides of the celebrated St. Cecilia, by Raffaelle, and a few other *chefs-d'œuvre*, not belonging to the Bolognese school. The last executed, and perhaps one of the most beautiful pictures, by Guido, is painted on silk ; it was done for the purpose of being borne in a procession. It represents men and saints offering thanksgivings to the Virgin for the cessation of the plague.

Underneath is painted, small and in vivid colours, the city of Bologna, filled with dead bodies being carried to the tomb. Placed high above is the *Regina Cœli* from her bright throne, "on clouds of glory seated," looking down with pity, and returning their acknowledgments marked by the profoundest emotion for her having interposed "between the dead and the living, and stayed the plague."

In the same most splendid gallery are several pictures by Elisabetta Saranni. We had seen besides, in churches and elsewhere, others from her pencil of surpassing merit. She was the daughter of a painter, Andrea Saranni. It was said of some one, whose name I forget, that "the Loves mixed his colours, and the Graces guided his pencil;" and none could deserve such an eulogium better than the fair Bolognese. She was the favourite pupil of Guido, and no wonder, for his genius had kindled and fashioned hers. She was in the prime of life just twenty-seven years old, and in the height of her fame, when a young nobleman fell despe-

rately in love with her ; but she preferred her Easel and her independence to the acceptance of his hand. She not only refused to marry him, but caricatured him with her pencil. He was driven to madness by her scorn, and caused her to be poisoned. He then fled, and her family instituted a suit against him, which, however, from some causes now unknown, was dropped without his being convicted. The particulars connected with this suit, we were told by a gentleman, had lately been published, and he directed us to a shop where he supposed we could purchase the work, but we were unsuccessful in our attempt to procure it.

When Elisabetta was dying, she desired to be laid near her deceased master, Guido, who had died at an advanced age a few years before. Perhaps she had told him, as Ruth did Noami, that “ where *he* was buried, there *she* would be buried.” The same stone covers their remains, in the church of St. Dominique. No monument has been raised to their memory ; merely a tablet on the wall near to their tomb

is inscribed to them. But while the glowing colours last of the pictures they each painted in that church, Guido Réné and Elisabetta Saranni will not be forgotten. Their works surround their grave, and thither pilgrims will be attracted to offer their tribute of sympathy and admiration.

LETTER XXIX.

Ferrara.

WE left Bologna about three o'clock in the afternoon, and reached Ferrara just as it was getting dark. The intervening country is flat and uninteresting, but on the whole is rendered pleasing by fine verdure and high cultivation. The festive air of the vines waving in the light breeze, and crossing in luxuriant wreaths from tree to tree, uniting their double festoons far as the eye could reach, seemed like a wide pervading preparation of nature for man's enjoyment—an emblem of universal love.

We observed, for the first time in Italy, many neatly thatched houses. It appeared as if the straw of the Indian corn had been employed in making the well-compacted roofs.

That plant is a great blessing to the country at large, not merely as regards food, but also by enabling the poor to have cheap cleanly beds. Only in one instance, (however indifferent occasionally were the inns,) had we to complain of the beds; with that single exception, they were satisfactory, being composed of the straw of Indian corn, which the addition of a small mattress renders quite comfortable.

Our first visit was to a palace which had belonged to some of the junior branches of the house of D'Este. One portion of it is now occupied by the rector of the parish, who instructs youth in theology and other clerical knowledge. There is a very large and handsome room which continues as formerly, a library, with the difference of being open to the public. At the farther end from the entrance is the monument of Ariosto, erected by his nephews many years after his death. It was originally placed in the church of the Benedictine convent.

When the French came here at the end of

the last or beginning of the present century, to fraternize with the inhabitants of Ferrara, they gave persons and things hard blows, though they promised only the most tender embraces. Like the hugging of the bear, their professed kindness invariably turned to rough usage. General Meollis having had such respect for the poet, whose lively and brilliant minstrelsy has been a source of delight, not only to his countrymen, but to Europe at large, had Ariosto's remains, along with his monument, removed to its present situation. Apprehending that the latter would be destroyed in the church, where the soldiers had access to it, the transfer was effected with great pomp and ceremony; the square through which the procession passed was given the name it retains, of Ariosto.

It is striking, that to Ariosto, when dead, should be appropriated the most conspicuous place in a room where he was accustomed to feel himself, at all events at one period of his life, so insignificant a person: it is the same

apartment to which he habitually repaired, when a boy, to say his lessons and study with the young Lord Ippolito ; at least, such was the information we received from the librarian, who pointed out to us an adjacent house, where Ariosto's father resided. The poet was born at Reggio, his mother's native city, (she was distantly related to the reigning family,) but Ferrara became his home. We were shown a door in the adjoining garden through which, according to our cicerone, he passed, and from thence ascended to an outer staircase to the library to be taught, together with the afterwards notorious, vindictive, and worthless Cardinal D'Este, towards whom some sort of juvenile attachment was probably formed on the part of the young minstrel, as he dedicated his best services and finest poems (the former for a long period) to a master who ill-rewarded his active exertions, and could not appreciate his genius ; for after the publication of the "Orlando," his eminence is said to have asked the poet, "Where did you find so many

trumpery stories, Master Ludovico?" At length, wearied with the unsuitable requirements of his employer, who he said wanted to turn him from a poet into a postilion, "E di poeta, cavallar mi feo," he refused to accompany the cardinal into Hungary, where the secular concerns of a bishopric and archbishopric which he held, demanded his presence. Ariosto excused himself on the plea of indifferent health, which he anticipated would be rendered worse if he encountered the severe climate of Hungary, his malady being of a pulmonary nature; he also pleaded his mother's age and infirmities, and the impossibility of his leaving her. The cardinal, indignant at his peremptory command being questioned, threatened to withdraw from his *protégé* a stipend of twenty-five crowns which he received every four months from some office in the patron's gift at Milan, together with other more trifling favours he had conferred, not from his own purse, for he gave nothing out of that, but from some petty situations at his disposal. On

receiving the intimation that such were likely to be the consequences of his spirited determination, Ariosto replied, "Let his eminence be undeceived, and tell him that rather than be a serf, I can patiently endure poverty. If the holy cardinal thinks that he has purchased me with his presents, it is not bitter or hard for me to return the gifts, and to take back my former liberty." Thus ended the friendship of their youthful days.

Ariosto afterwards found some employment in the service of the reigning duke, the cardinal's brother or nephew, no very munificent patron either, but not an oppressive and tyrannical one to the poet, whose poverty and not his will caused him to bend to the hard yoke of dependence more on account of others than himself, for his father had left to his care a large and ill-provided family.

At length fortune smiled upon him in a most unlooked-for quarter; he was sent by the duke his master on a mission to Correggio, to Davolo Marquis del Vasto, who commanded the Impe-

rial army in Italy. The ambassador found favour in the general's eyes, and he settled upon him an annuity of one hundred gold ducats, on the ground that princes and great generals should behave liberally to learned men, especially to poets who sing the praises of heroes and warlike achievements. This handsome donation ought to have been felt as a rebuke by the princes of the house of D'Este, who had never given any pension or reward to Ariosto for his writings. Ariosto celebrated the munificent donor in a new edition of his great poem which appeared shortly after, but he did not enjoy this accession of wealth more than one or two years; he died in 1533, aged fifty-eight. How often it happens that to persons who have suffered want and privations all their lives, fortune arrives, as if in bitter mockery, when it is too late!

We were shown Ariosto's calamajo, (ink-stand.) It is made of bronze, of fine workmanship, the gift, (according to the librarian) of Alphonso I., and fabricated under his

own immediate inspection. A Cupid surmounts the cover, holding a finger on his lips, importuning, I suppose, that there should be no blabbing of love-letters.

It is remarkable that at the period when printing was coming into general use, which so largely contributed to render the multitude more reasoning, and to disabuse and disenchant them respecting many of those illusions that previously added to the picturesqueness of life, —just then, at the commencement of more prosaic times, Ariosto poured forth the vigorous effusions of his vivid imagination, and has left a storehouse whence all minds, wearied with the dullness of matter-of-fact commonplaces, can resort, to kindle new ideas, and which affords refreshment by the never-ending variety and brilliancy of its heroic pictures. It cannot be said of the ages of chivalry, that “they had no poet, and they died ;” they will live for ever in the pages of Ariosto and Tasso.

On leaving the library we went to see the plain, small, and simple house, that Ariosto

built for himself, on which is carved an inscription that lost its interest for us by our knowing from Mr. Panizzi's delightful memoir, prefixed to the best edition of the poet's works, that the present is not the inscription he put over his door. The rooms in this house are few, and small ; it is, however, a far superior abode to that inhabited by Shakspeare in his early years, though probably not better than the house he purchased on his return to Stratford on Avon, when he retired on his *easy* fortune of some two or three thousand pounds, he who enriched the world with what gold could never buy ! Of his latter house there are no remains, although the low-roofed cottage in which he first saw the light is standing.

The observation is often forced upon one, of how humbly lodged in general were those whom posterity call great ! With posterity the rank and ample possessions of their predecessors go for nothing ; it is amongst a man's contemporaries alone that such things are in estimation, and that they confer value and consideration.

Our next visit was to the moated and feudal-looking castle of the once illustrious family of D'Este, to which we passed over by a low bridge. It is surrounded by a broad piece of deep black water, that looks as though it might be the water of oblivion, Lethe itself, ready to engulf the battlemented walls that once enclosed a gay and polished court, and which now seem so deserted and forlorn, that one might expect to see a fox looking through the windows,—having, according to Ossian's description, "the rank grass wave about his head,"—but that it has become the residence of a cardinal. In the Pope's dominions—as Pachas are in those of the Sultan—cardinals are sent to govern particular districts, but form, by the mildness of their rule, (though they are seldom enlightened politicians,) a contrast to the Turkish governors.

We passed through the silent, lonely court-yard, where jousts and tournaments were held, and we are told as many as a hundred knights often tilted, who spared no expense to render

the spectacle attractive in the eyes of the brilliant assemblage that met on such occasions.

We then went through suites of deserted apartments in the palace, all vacant and sombre. Of several the ceilings are finely painted. To the inquiries we made respecting the painter, every reply was that they were done by Dosso Dossi,—who, according to our *cicerone*, was the chief, if not only artist, whose talents had been in requisition for the decoration of the apartments. His name, so often repeated, and being somewhat mispronounced, was making us smile, when all risible tendencies were repressed by our guide telling us we had entered the room of Parasina, the hapless victim of the anger of her indignant husband, Duke Nicholas III. Lord Byron has told her sad story with such deep pathos, that every one remembers his beautiful poem. Her windows looked upon the before-mentioned courtyard, (so often the scene of pomp and revelry,) whence she was compelled to witness her lover bending his head to the axe; and I suppose it was no stretch of the

bard's fancy that she lost her reason when he lost his life. After his son Hugo's death the unfortunate Nicholas is said never to have smiled again; such horrors could not have passed from his mind.

We next went to see the prison of another victim to the less excusable vindictiveness of a subsequent sovereign, Alphonso II.; and whilst we were within the narrow walls of the dungeon where Tasso, the poet of love and chivalry, passed some years, a violent storm of thunder burst, apparently directly over us, and we saw, in quick successive flashes, the lightning's vivid glare, through the one small grated window, and the open door. It was very awful, and, filled with Tasso as were our imaginations, seemed to tell the story of Heaven's wrath blasting for ever the dynasty of him who had done such wrong to the bard. Alphonso's late appointed heir, after an ineffectual struggle, was constrained to abandon the duchy of Ferrara to the pontiff's claims. Whoever happened to be possessor of the chair of St.

Peter, when there was any chance of success, usually constituted himself residuary legatee of the Italian princes.

We were shown at the library the identical manuscript which Tasso, when condemned to the madman's cell, carried thither, like the minstrel's harp, "his sole remaining joy." He made many alterations and additions to it during the period of his confinement, and it may be supposed that the images he drew from "fancy's pictured urn," whilst he sang of

"Ladye love, and war, romance, and knightly worth," cheered him in his sad abode.

The person who has the charge of the cold, small, miserable cell, which the poet occupied for two years, (the latter five of his imprisonment were passed in a less execrable place owing to the interference of the Duchess d'Urbino,) told us that he had there, on the damp earthen floor, supplied Lord Byron with a table and chair, and that he sat for several hours busily employed in writing. The horrors of the place entered into his soul, and the deep

feeling that inspired "the Lament of Tasso," rendered it a fit tribute from England's first of modern poets, to Italy's last great master-bard; unless, indeed, Alfieri claims that title.

Torquato Tasso belonged to a family of consideration, some members of whom had borne high titles in Spain, Flanders, and Germany, especially in the latter country, where sovereign princes had been of his race. No wonder, then, that he should expect to be treated like one of gentle blood, and honoured as a man of genius. At first he was received at the court of Ferrara with marked demonstrations of favour; but it does not appear that he long had reason to be contented with the demeanour of Alphonso towards him; more than once he abruptly and dissatisfied left the circle of the *soi-disant* patron of literature. The poet became unhappy and querulous; an irritable temperament is too often the sad drawback which prevents great mental superiority of a poetical cast being an enviable possession. The prince, we learn, tyrannically resented

some expressions which did not imply the full measure of deference and respect that he demanded; and probably he was also indignant at Tasso's temerity in presuming to address love sonnets to the Princess Leonora. The patron wished him to move as a satellite to add to his glory, without more than distantly approaching his sphere. Tasso waged an unequal contest; his pretensions were not recognised, and he had neither the courage to withdraw himself altogether from the scene of splendid misery towards which he was too strongly attracted, nor the self-control to suppress the expression of his displeasure at the treatment he experienced.

It would seem, from many instances, that men of family cannot escape from suffering a certain kind of uneasiness when they become writers. They are haunted by the apprehension of merging their social advantages, and of sinking into a lower grade, when they class themselves with those who are only possessed of natural gifts, by means of which, advancement

in life is attained. Strange enough, (though, we all admit such is the fact,) that the favourable accident derived from birth should, by the male sex at least, be preferred to personal distinction. Horace Walpole and others might be adduced as cases in point.

From this species of dilemma women happily escape altogether. They may not always find talents an advantage; sometimes these are far otherwise; but they never feel that because of them their position in society is in any degree compromised, whether they write merely for their own pleasure, or do so on the principle of the Frenchman, who dressed hair "for his amusement, and for sixpence," it is all the same as regards their social condition, which is never in their own imagination, nor in that of any one else, lowered by their having the power of amusing or instructing. Madame de Staél may have been proud of the rank of the family to which she was allied by marriage; but I suspect she was far prouder of her own splendid endowments, than if the Herald's Office could

have made out for her all the quarterings that an unblemished German descent requires.

After serving seven years' apprenticeship to woe, within the walls of a lunatic asylum, Tasso, on being emancipated, had but little capacity left for enjoyment. The woman he loved was no more; many friends came forward filled with compassion for his sufferings, and anxious to administer to his comfort;—one in particular, the Marquis John Battista Manso, (afterwards the distinguished friend of Milton,) travelled with him, and tried by every cheering effort to make him amends for the past. For a short time only were these fond cares successful; his mind had been too long depressed to regain its tone. Lost happiness, like water poured upon the ground, cannot be recovered. A few restless years passed over his head, and he sought in the humble convent of St. Onofrio, at Rome, a resting-place; and there, full of piety and resignation, he breathed his last. His friends had been preparing a triumph for him; he waited not for it, and they crowned him

with laurel when he was dead ! Vain and revolting ceremony, though meant to do *him* honour—

. . . . “ Che di caduchi allori
Non circonda la fronte in Helicona ;
Ma su ne Cielo infra i beati chorî
Ha di stelle immortali aurea corona ! ”

Whilst we were in Rome we stood near his grave, and marked his plain monument in the church belonging to the aforesaid convent.

When the storm was over, which caused our protracted stay beneath the low vaulted roof of Tasso's prison, we left it, and our guide, “ the sad historian,” not of “ the pensive plain,” but of the dilapidated city, told us that there remained nothing more for us to see but the cemetery. I thought we had seen little else since we entered its grass-grown streets, “ whose symmetry was not made for solitude.” These have a most deserted appearance; many of the palaces and houses are entirely shut up, and others that are not closed seem but scantily inhabited; few persons were

walking about, and we saw neither horses nor carriages in any direction; one might fancy that the Sleeping Beauty, who dozed for a hundred years, had taken her nap here, and that the inhabitants had followed her example, and were not yet fully aroused from the effects of their slumber.

I do not understand how it happened that Ferrara was built on so different a plan from other Italian towns, where the narrow streets were constructed, we are told, for the purpose of affording shade, as well as of being more easily defended. I recollect reading somewhere that Montaigne visited this city during the reign of Alphonso the Second, and that he admired the wide streets and fine palaces, but even then remarked, as we do now, their deserted aspect; though doubtless they did not then exhibit their present forlorn appearance.

Ferrara, in the days of its splendour, might have been considered a type of the house of D'Este. The resources of the duchy went to its maintenance, being the place of the sove-

reign's abode, in whose person centered all the social and political importance of the principality:—so that with the individual it rose or fell; a counterpart of the condition of many of the petty states of Italy at that period.

We were conducted to the Campo Santo, and it really is the only new-looking and flourishing place we have seen since our arrival here the day before yesterday. Although the buildings that surround it are the cloisters of the ancient convent of Certosa, erected by Borsus, the first Duke of Ferrara, (whose tomb is a conspicuous object,) they have undergone such a process in being remodelled for their present purpose, that there is no place we have seen here so cheerful in many respects, or so little wearing the appearance of desolation, as that where the dead are congregated. On some of their tombs are fine pieces of sculpture, one of the most remarkable of which is an admirable statue of Aldovrandi, the great naturalist. There is also a magnificent bust of Leopold Cicognara, who was a patron of learn-

ing. He died in 1835. An inscription relates that it is the work of his honoured friend Canova, and in rendering that melancholy tribute of friendship, Canova executed his last work.

Rovigo.

We had no farther inducement to remain at Ferrara, that scene of dread repose, a sort of link between a dead and a living city; its houses not all unroofed as at Pompeii, but its streets destitute of the busy hum of men, and silent as an empty bee-hive, whose active inhabitants are no more. We were well pleased to turn our backs on its once "voluptuous pavilions," and to get amongst the green fields and ever renovating works of Nature. The late storm had cleared the atmosphere, all was freshness, and that "God made the country, man the town," was never more sensibly felt by us, than after bidding adieu to mouldering palaces, when we looked again upon the verdure of meadows, and hedges filled with bloom. The latter abounded

with luxuriant wild roses, and the large elder-flower, like clustering stars, besides numerous flowers of lesser growth. Sweet birds, gay butterflies, and chirping grasshoppers enlivened the scene, and many were the exquisite summer sounds and odours which, arising under the clear blue sky, mingled with the charms of the dewy landscape, forming altogether a brilliant contrast to the dark and stormy hour we had passed in the narrow cell of Tasso—of him who had so keen a sense of the beauties of Nature. It must have been to his always religious mind, an alleviation of his griefs to know that man's tyranny could only be of short duration, compared with the Creator's power of conferring happiness—that “sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

LETTER XXIX.

Padua.

WE slept at the small town of Rovigo, which we left at five o'clock this morning, and, after proceeding a few miles, stopped at the end of the first post and got a light carriage to take us into a bye road, on which we proceeded some miles, until we reached a succession of steep hills leading to the small hamlet or village of Arquà, which consists of poor detached houses, situated amongst orchards and olive-trees. On the top of a high hill, within a garden's narrow bounds, stands the house of Petrarch, now the property of a gentleman who, with good taste, does not suffer it to be occupied by rude peasants, as they would probably deface the re-

mains which time has spared of the fresco paintings that adorned it.

Immediately on our carriage being seen, a Custode came forward, well knowing that his services would be in requisition by the visitors to that lonely place. The house is not many yards from the road; the ground floor consists of offices, kitchen, and cellars; a flight of stone steps leads up from the garden to the chambers Petrarch inhabited during the last few years of his life. A central door admitted us into a good sized apartment with a brick floor; another door, or window, is at the further opposite end which opens on a balcony. On either side are two small rooms, besides a closet. The poet's bed-chamber and study led from one to the other; his books must have been few, judging from the space allotted for them. It was previously to his settling at Arquà that he made his famous present of books to Venice, which formed the commencement of the Library at St. Mark's.

Around the walls of the centre room, where we entered, and also in the two chambers that

Petrarch more particularly occupied, there is fresco painting about a foot in depth just beneath the ceiling. Laura and he are depicted everywhere; it forms a kind of history of the progress of their acquaintance, and of his attachment. If it were not executed under his directions, his letters and sonnets would have afforded materials to the artist, if indeed the “Trionfi in vita ed in morte di madonna Laura” did not alone supply them. The series commences by Petrarch's meeting with Laura on her return from church, where he first saw her dressed in the memorable robe embroidered with violets, the flower to which the appropriate motto has been given, “pour me trouver, il faut me chercher.” I marvel that we ladies have not been fonder of such ornament, associated as it has become with retiring modesty on the one part, and fervent constancy on the other.

Laura's head-dress throughout, is the same in which she appears in a beautiful picture on vellum, prefixed, together with one of Petrarch, to an ancient MS. copy of his poems in the Lau-

rentian library at Florence, in which quiet retreat both were, by permission, very exactly copied by some of our party. In one of the compartments on the wall of the principal room, Laura is represented in two different points of view; first as a lovely woman in the bloom of health, habited simply in a walking dress; at a little distance she lies stretched on the ground in the soft sleep of death, in which the poet describes her as retaining all her beauty, she "Che oltra le belle bella." Again she is seen bending near his sleeping figure; he tells us that in dreams she came to him, "sembiante alla stagione."

"E quella man già tanto desiata
A me, parlando e sospirando, porse ?"

and when terrestrial bonds no longer interposed between them, he heard from her,

"Mai diviso
Da te non fu'l mio cor, nè giammai' fia;
Ma temprai la tua fiamma col mio viso.
Perché, a salvar te e me, null' altra via
Era alla nostra giovenetta fama:
Nè per ferza è però madre men pia.

Quante volte diss' io meco : Questi ama,
Anzi arde ; or si convien ch'a ciò provveggia !
E mal puo provveder chi teme o brama."

* * * *

Madame de Staél tells us that the passion of love is only an episode in men's lives, whilst it forms the history of poor women's existence. If such be the case, " 'tis pity 'tis true." Petrarch, however, forms an honourable exception to the inconstant sex, and marvellous it is that his justly acquired fame has not exercised becoming influence over their wandering fancies. What Waller said of Daphne's lover, in allusion to himself, may be applied to Petrarch, that he " pursued the nymph and filled his arms with bays." For his Latin poems, from which he expected to derive his greatest fame, are scarcely ever looked at, whilst his Sonnets are read for ever with undiminished favour. His Letters and other prose writings in Latin are, however, I believe, held in high estimation.

Some wise people consider Petrarch's devotion

to Laura was unworthy a man of his great powers, and that he ought to have applied them to purposes more beneficial to mankind, and not have wasted his time in writing love verses. He did not, it must be admitted, neglect the business of life; he was indefatigable in his efforts to serve his country, whose fallen and divided state lay heavy at his heart, and he likewise used all possible means, and often most successfully, in aid of the revival of learning. He wrote of his own love, 'tis true, and of no other, and in this point he differed from Homer and Shakspeare, and from ten thousand others of lesser fame, who have made that sentiment, as he did, the subject of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

Madame de Stael has eloquently written thus:—"Oh que j'aime l'inutile—l'inutile, si l'existence n'est qu'un travail pénible pour un misérable gain! Mais si nous sommes sur cette terre en marche vers le ciel qu'y-a-t'il mieux à faire que d'élever assez notre âme pour qu'elle sente l'infini, l'invisible et l'Eternel au

milieu de toutes les bornes qui l'entourent ;" and we find that Petrarch's capacity of loving was not engrossed by a frail mortal. His aspirations ascended far beyond "this dim spot called earth," and all that it inherits.

Whilst on this subject, I am tempted to transcribe a page from Eustace's Travels lying open before me. There is something so very refined and elegant in his manner of treating it. "Petrarca continued either to compose or to correct the strains that love inspired, not only for several years after the death of its object, but even to the near approach of his own : a circumstance which, considering the religious turn of his mind, particularly in his latter days, proves that he attached no criminality to the passion itself, since he could indulge himself so freely in its recollection.

"As to the sonnets of Petrareca, they are trifling, and so are the elegies of Propertius and of Tibullus, and all the numerous poems, both ancient and modern, that treat on the same airy and unsubstantial subject; but trinkets

may derive value from their materials and workmanship, and even love songs may acquire both importance and interest from their language and sentiments. Genius communicates its own dignity to every subject that it chooses to handle; it can give weight to insignificance, and make even an amorous ditty the vehicle of awful truth and of useful lessons. This observation is more applicable, perhaps, to Petrarca than to any other poet. Equal, I had almost said superior, in felicity of expression to his Roman predecessors, he rises far above them in delicacy of thought, and in dignity of sentiment.

" He borrows no embellishments from the fictions of mythology, and indulges himself in no pastoral tales, no far-fetched allusions. The spirit of religion, which strongly influenced his mind in all the vicissitudes of life, not unfrequently gives his passion something of the solemnity of devotion, and inspires the holy strains that chant

" Quanto piu vale
Sempiterna bellezza che mortale ? "

In the midst of the Euganean hills, (said, by-the bye, to have been a favourite haunt of the soothsayers of old,) it was very interesting to find ourselves seated in the apartments where Petrarch lived, to look on the same views that had met his eyes, on the clustering hills around, on the dales beneath, extending into wide cultivated plains. His modest mansion has been truly called “venerably simple.” He to whom the palaces of the great were always open, and where he was an honoured guest, selected that retired spot to pass his latter years with his daughter and her husband, Francesco di Brossano; far from the agitating scenes amongst which his life was passed. There was something dignified in his retreat to the deep repose of encircling hills, in order to withdraw himself as much as possible from worldly affairs in his latter days. He who was the friend of pontiffs, the beloved companion and adviser of kings and princes, the mediator between contending powers, resorting to for counsel by republics and republicans; the patron of literature, the active

restorer himself of letters, and though last, not least conspicuous portion of his character, the lover with whose sighs and tears succeeding generations sympathise,—he withdrew from the homage that attended him everywhere, to the quiet of an humble dwelling, and the consolations of filial affection. We sat in the chair in his study where he was found dead, his brow resting on an open book.

We next visited the burial-place of Petrarch where

“ Reared in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover.”

A large colossal red marble tomb, supported on massive columns, and looking somewhat like an Egyptian work of art, stands quite detached in front of the lowly chapel of Arquà; it bears the inscription composed by himself, which would require, to render it legible, the clearing hand of some fond devoted “ Old Mortality.” It may, for anything we could decipher, equal

the touching excellence and pathos of “ the bard’s epitaph,” written for his own tombstone by Burns, and which I believe has never been surpassed in deep, heartfelt, affecting truth and beauty ; he who could render a crushed daisy, or the overturning of a “ mousie’s wee bit heap o’ leaves and stibble,” a vehicle for such impressive reflection, could not fail, in treating of the “ thoughtless follies” which “ laid him low,” to make our hearts pour forth their most abundant sympathy. And it is not only in an epitaph that I think the humble peasant Scotchman might stand the test of comparison with the learned and polished writers of Italy, but even in respect to the verses in which lies their chief excellence. Burn’s address “ To Mary in Heaven,” as well as some others of his poems, are not, in my opinion, inferior to any of the kind with which I am acquainted. Who will not say that

“ Souls are ripened in our northern sky,”

as well as in more propitious climes, and genius

kindled, too, which is not surpassed even amongst the ardent spirits of the south.

Petrarch's bust in bronze surmounts his tomb. In one portion of the marble a rent, that is well repaired, was made by some Florentines for the purpose of extracting his body, but an arm alone was carried off. They seem to have an insatiable desire for the bodies of the illustrious dead ; they stole Michael Angelo from Rome ; made an attempt on Petrarch, and petitioned to have their banished Dante restored to them. Apparently, they were not of opinion that "a living ass is better than a dead lion."

Petrarch early turned his back on Tuscany, and only visited it once or twice for a short time, after leaving it when a boy. Having abandoned it during his life, he did not choose to honour the home of his family with the possession of his remains. He may have thought that Florence was tardy in doing him justice, and in paying a deserved tribute to his merits, of the extent of which there was no one more

sensible than himself. Perhaps there was some point of sympathy in this respect between him and Cicero, his favourite author.

It was on the day of the third anniversary of Laura's death, the sixth of April, that Petrarch received a message from the republic, restoring the property, and with it the rights of citizenship of which his father had been deprived, and also making him the offer of becoming the head of a projected university ; which prospective dignity he declined. The bearer of the message was his devoted friend Boccaccio, who, it may well be supposed, furthered, as much as possible, the interests of the poet whom he, with the most generous feeling, delighted to honour ; and he selected a day of especial gloomy reflections to convey intelligence of cheering import. I have heard some literary persons hazard the conjecture that Petrarch could not forgive Florence the wrongs inflicted on Dante. But though poets are said generally to feel injuries and even slights keenly enough, and sometimes to imagine them when not real, yet their unreasonableness

is not often, if ever, of so excursive a character ; and there is little, I believe, to corroborate the opinion that Petrarch, in such particular, formed any exception to his kind. Strange to say, the " *Divina Commedia*" had not found a place in his library, until Boeccacio, the transcriber, presented it to him accompanied with profuse commendations. Such indifference seems even more extraordinary than what is mentioned by his biographer, of Lord Byron, that he scarcely at all read, and never quoted Shakspeare. Surely this must have been an accidental circumstance ; he who so warmly praised the genius, and continually feasted on the works of Scott, his contemporary, sharing with him the homage of civilized Europe, could not have entertained a feeling derogatory to the man whose greatness is past discussion, and who is fixed in the hearts of his countrymen as the sun is in the heavens. As little can it be supposed likely, notwithstanding some slight appearances, judged of, perhaps, superficially, that Petrarch could have contemned the greatest poet of

modern Italy; who not only perfected the language which became an instrument of most exquisite power in his hands, but also shed so enduring a lustre on the country Petrarch loved with such deep earnestness and sincerity. It is possible that he may have disapproved of the political conduct of Dante, conceiving it to have operated unfavourably on the interests of liberty, and hence his apparent coldness, but this conjecture opens a wide field for discussion.

I have been so tired by our morning's ramble, including the pilgrimage to the poet's tomb, that I have preferred sitting in the hotel and using my pen, to encountering the further fatigue of seeing the sights of Padua, to which, I hope, we shall be able on our return here to devote more time than is now at our disposal consistently with our purpose of reaching Venice this evening, in order to witness the fête of "the Corpus Domini" to be held to-morrow, May 26. We hope, hereafter, to form an acquaintance with Saint Anthony and his miracles, some of which have been illustrated by the pencil of Titian.

LETTER XXX.

Venice.

A SHORT drive from Padua brought us to Fusina, where we left our carriage, and stepping into a gondola, we proceeded to this city along the liquid road marked by clustered piles of wood, which direct all kinds of vessels to avoid the shallows and keep their path in the deep water. The Venetians had only to destroy those stakes, and an enemy's fleet could not advance; and this circumstance rendered it an invulnerable place of refuge to the Veneti and other people who fled from the opposite coast to escape from the tyranny and desolating power of Attila. Thus, on some marshes where only a few scattered huts of fishermen existed, there arose the once proud city of Venice.

On the first view, it strikes one as being as much unlike every other city as the nautilus, plying its oars and with its sail expanded, is unlike all other shell-fish. As we advanced I could do nothing but gaze and wonder at the city lying before us on the waters: congregated domes, towers, pillars, and palaces, appeared to rise like the creations of an enchanter's wand out of the sea, which ordinarily suffers no habitation of man excepting his "floating prison" to dwell on its surface, and causes that to be for ever tossed to and fro, and liable to instant destruction, hurled to pieces amidst dashing surges, or engulfed in its bottomless abyss.

It seemed to me, on beholding Venice, as though men must have had the laws of nature suspended on their behalf, and the power imparted to them of saying to the bounding waves, "So far shalt thou come and no farther;" for on that element where their dominion was unknown, they built themselves a city that was "a marvel and a show."

I had often heard of the mirage that de-

ceives seafaring people, making them believe they are looking on green fields and trees whilst surrounded only by the multitudinous sea ; and as I felt myself borne along the water, and saw a city standing in the midst based thereon, it seemed to me a mirage, not of the ordinary kind, but still a delusion—some bright vision of the fancy.

Familiar as we all are with accounts of Venice, we were lost in astonishment on first beholding it. If people were altogether ignorant of the existence of such a place, and a traveller from an unknown country described it, we probably should think his tale deserved about as much credit as we usually bestow on narratives touching mermaids, centaurs, and unicorns. Perhaps we might not say it was absolutely impossible that there was a race of men, a kind of amphibious animals inhabiting a splendid city built on piles of wood ; the principal internal communications of which, as substitutes for streets, are canals, and that, in the midst of swamps, churches, palaces, arsenals, are erected

upon piles of wood, their basement stories washed by the water out of which they rise, and where no cow, horse, mule, nor any beast of burthen is to be seen. Yet such is Venice, the native home of thousands, apparently independent of the supplies from their mother earth, on which all gregarious animals rely for subsistence. A more appropriate emblem of this city than a winged lion, I think, would have been Venus, as she is often represented, rising out of a shell—a marine denizen of wondrous beauty.

On our arrival, just as it was getting dark, we stopped at three hotels successively, and were told at each that we could not be accommodated, as they were already full of English people. Travellers from our country come here in great numbers, like migrating birds, at two different periods of the year—some in autumn *en route* to Italy, and others returning from thence in the early part of summer.

The gondoliers mentioned the name of a fourth hotel, where at length we were comfort-

ably accommodated. After resting a short time, we passed through a different door from that by which we had entered from the gondola, and crossing a bridge over a canal, we soon found ourselves in St. Mark's place. The general appearance at night, as we first saw it, reminded us of the Palais Royal at Paris, with its illuminated cafés and moving throng congregated for business and pleasure; but at our early visit next morning we received a very different impression. St. Mark's Place and the adjoining Piazzetta are far more beautiful; independently of the view from the latter, there are so many magnificent objects in close juxtaposition.

At the piazzetta, near to the water's edge, are the two grand columns, trophies brought from the Archipelago,* one of them surmounted

* It was in the memorable reign of the Doge Ziani that these two magnificent columns were erected on their present site. They were brought by Domenicho Michieli, on his victorious return from Palestine, in 1125. It was long before any engineer could be found enterprising enough to attempt to rear

by a winged lion. So noble is the appearance of this work of art, that one can scarcely help regretting there is no prototype of it in nature.

How it happened that nature did not give wings to the whole species, I cannot conceive.

them; and, consequently, for more than fifty years they were left neglected on the quay. At length Barralliero, a Lombard, undertook the task, which he accomplished. The government, perhaps believing that he could never effect his object, promised, in case of success, to grant him whatever boon he might ask, consistent with its honour; he demanded that games of chance, hitherto forbidden throughout the city, might be played between the columns,—it is supposed with a reservation to himself of the profits derivable therefrom. His request was granted, and a great nuisance was thus established. Afterwards, in order to render the spot infamous, and to deter the populace from frequenting it, it was made the scene of capital punishments; the bodies of malefactors were thus gibbeted under the windows of the ducal palace. A third pillar had, along with the others, been brought, (it is supposed from the Archipelago,) but, by an unfortunate accident, was sunk just at the moment of landing. The French, after the lapse of more than six centuries, tried to recover it, for the purpose of being transported to Paris, but in vain.

I am sure I shall never see a lion *in propriâ personâ*, if he should chance not to have wings, without regretting the deficiency. Such addition, whoever has been at Venice will allow, se nonte vero, è ben trovato.

The other column supports the statue of the ancient patron of Venice, St. Theodore, armed with a lance and shield, and treading on a serpent. He bears his shield in his right, and the lance in his left hand, which looks as if he had not been much exercised where "fields were fought and won." And yet, notwithstanding such significant demonstration, it is said the Venetians exchanged him as their tutelary saint for St. Mark, because of the pacific character of the latter: St. Theodore having been a soldier, like St. George, the patron of Genoa, albeit his "occupation's gone" and transferred to another, is still a very conspicuous personage, and apparently allowed to act on the defensive for the good of the city, as he was placed on a lofty eminence where he could descry the coming foe from afar.

At a short distance from the columns is the magnificent palace of the doges, perhaps the more striking from its reversing the principles of architecture; for an enormous mass of solid wall rests on a slender fretwork of shafts, arches, and intersected circles. Yet the effect of the whole is beautiful. In a long gallery underneath some of those fretwork arches we sat, the morning after our arrival, to see the celebration of the *fête* of the Corpus Domini. A grand procession of priests and their attendants, all dressed in most varied, and some in gorgeous robes, issued from St. Mark's church, and went slowly through the piazza on the four sides of the square, the centre of which was filled by an admiring crowd. Regiments under arms were drawn up in the Piazzetta, and on certain occasions they reversed their arms, and, like all else who were present, dropped on their knees, and for a few moments all was hushed as the solitude of midnight. There is something very striking and affecting in such a silent and simultaneous act of devotion of an assembled

multitude; it seemed as though some solemn injunction, such as “ Peace, be still !” were addressed with power to every throbbing heart. A bright sun shone forth from the blue sky above, which the good Catholics might think denoted that their services were deemed acceptable,—as the fire of old indicated that Abel’s sacrifice was well pleasing to the Lord.

An instantaneous movement, and all were again erect, the full Austrian band performing some of the finest compositions in the world. The procession recommenced, and again perambulated the piazza. At length appeared a numerous band of capuchins, “ in sober livery clad ;” the music ceased, and the monks chanted, long and loud, their accustomed litanies, until the firing of cannon, several times repeated, terminated at two o’clock the celebration of the ceremonies.

A more brilliant spectacle of the kind could hardly be imagined; for while St. Mark’s Place was filled with persons in their best holiday dress, the churchmen exhibited their mag-

nificence in various ways; not merely in robes and other paraphernalia, but also in many rich accompaniments, amongst which were high gilt standards, carried in the procession, some bearing a profusion of flowers, and others massive candelabra.

The ships lying near to the Piazzetta, as well as those more distant, had numberless flags of different colours suspended from their rigging, which, floating in the breeze, and lighted up by a brilliant sun, looked like flights of tropical birds of rainbow hues, that had bent their course hither to bear their part in adding splendour to the festa.

As soon as the cannon sounded, the crowd dispersed, and many were the picturesque groups of persons we saw betaking themselves to gaily-decked gondolas, for the purpose of reaching their houses in the adjacent islands, and different parts of the city.

In the front of St. Mark's church are three poles of great height, placed in bases of richly-wrought bronze; they have been for centuries

in their present situation. On gala days are suspended from them the Austrian flag. On such occasions they used formerly to display the flags of Cyprus, Candia, and Negropont—the conquest of which places by the republic these standards were erected to commemorate—now they serve to denote that the conquerors of other days are themselves conquered. Nevertheless, the effect of their present occasional decorations is equally striking to the stranger's eyes, though perhaps not equally pleasing to those of the Venetians.

St. Mark's church, which occupies one end of the oblong square, called St. Mark's Place, is a gorgeous building, but not nearly of sufficient height in proportion to the space of ground it occupies. The immediate impression this church made on me was that of being like a goodly-sized, over-dressed lady, who sacrificed elegance to the display of splendid apparel; indeed, on first seeing it, I rather think I had some indistinct vision of, or some association with, Queen Elizabeth, in the most richly-

brocaded of her three hundred dresses, (that perhaps which emulated the peacock's dyes,) and feathers worn surmounted by ruffs and puffs, farthingale and mantle, while many a flower sparkled on her stomacher, and in her hair, whose tender leaves and light petals were imitated by gems that gave forth intenser hues than Nature confers.

The architecture of St. Mark's church is neither Gothic, nor Greek, nor Saracenic, but is a combination or jumble of all. Nearly three hundred columns are crowded on the lower portions of the front, and about the same number support the balustrade and gallery above. The sides also are most richly adorned, and the whole is covered by five domes or cupolas, that look as if they had been transferred from the mosques of Constantinople, when the four celebrated bronze gilt horses were brought from thence. These splendid works of art were, it is said, originally tackled by Lysippus to the chariot of the sun, and were afterwards appropriated by a demon of darkness, as Nero

placed them on a triumphal arch consecrated to him at Rome: antiquaries find them depicted on some of his medals. Constantine afterwards sent them trotting to his new city, the embellishment of which was his great hobby-horse, and they adorned the hippodrome, until the aged Doge Enrico Dandolo, at the head of a combined army, in 1202, besieged and took Constantinople, when he despatched amongst other trophies the aforesaid horses to Venice, where, not only from their intrinsic excellence as works of art, but also from the reminiscences they awaken, so gratifying to the pride of Venetians, they have always been held in the highest possible estimation. They were mounted on four curtailed pillars over the principal entrance of St. Mark's church, whence Bonaparte summoned them to add to the splendour of his acquisitions in Paris. After his downfall they were brought back by Admiral Dandolo, a descendant of the "octogenarian chief," and still living here, to whom the Emperor of Austria very appropriately consigned the office of re-

storing them to the old quarters they had occupied for about six centuries. A worse situation could not at any period have been fixed on; for they cannot be half seen, and no imaginable connexion have they with a place of worship.'

The sides of St. Mark's Place are most richly adorned by handsome buildings, and if the centre, which is vacant, were made the locale of these celebrated horses, (the sole specimens of the noble animal that Venice contains,) attached to an antique bronze chariot, placed on a pedestal, they would be seen to advantage, and form a magnificent group.

A golden winged lion, on a rich blue ground, which looks like lapis lazuli, stands in a compartment just over the horses. I was ignorant of there being any scripture authority for such a post of honour being assigned to him, until I read in Eustace's travels some account of the matter. It seems that two Venetian merchants being at Alexandria in 829; by bribery, or some other means, obtained possession

from the Moslems of the body of St. Mark, which they conveyed, and presented to their native city : on its arrival it was carried to the ducal palace, and deposited in the doge's chapel. St. Mark was then, being there *in propriâ personâ*, declared patron and protector of the republic ; and the lion, which, in the mystic vision of Ezekiel, is thought to represent this evangelist, was emblazoned on its standards, and elevated on its towers. The church of St. Mark was erected soon after this event, and the saint has ever since retained his honour, notwithstanding that his departure from hence is more than suspected to be owing to the mercenary conduct of a tribune who, having usurped the authority of the doge, and being in want of funds, robbed the treasury and bartered the saint for gold. The Venetians however, being very unwilling to admit the truth of this statement, assert that he is still in their possession, but that his resting-place will remain an undivulged secret. The loyal subjects of Don Sebastian of Portugal long refused to give

credit to their prince's decease, because no particular circumstance proved the fact ; but the partizans of St Mark in general show much more zeal in his cause, by not allowing his protracted non-appearance to diminish their allegiance and attachment.

On some occasion when an imperial ambassador asked in a jeering tone, in what country the winged species of lion was to be found, a doge pleasantly answered : " In the same country which produces eagles with two heads!"

Although no church in Venice is to be compared to St. Mark's in richness of decoration, there are several far superior to it in beauty of architecture, especially those executed after the designs of Palladio; namely, Il Redentore; San Georgio; Santa Maria della Salute, and San Francesco della Vigna. There are several other very handsome churches, to many of which convents were formerly attached, which in the present day are used for barracks and government offices. Monastic life does not seem at present to be much adopted in Venice ;

but in the adjacent islands, where the same inducement does not operate to convert the convents to ordinary purposes, several remain in *statu quo*; and they cannot, I think, be without attraction to such Roman Catholics as wish to detach themselves from the business of life, and the haunts of men, and who are desirous of knowing no more of the vicissitudes of things here below than are presented by the movements of the tranquil or tumultuous waves by which they are surrounded. In the busiest lives there is doubtless much that bears analogy to such reveries: the retrospect at least would show how events have arisen that could be as little calculated on as the wind, of which "we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." And how, in the moral world, calms and storms have succeeded, that baffled all conjecture, equally of the active and astute politician—as physical changes have been beyond the ken of the solitary contemplative monk. The one perceives "there's a divinity

that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will;" while the other "sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind;" and both find that the scriptures alone solve the mystery of life.

LETTER XXXI.

Venice.

SAINT Mark's church, of which I have already spoken, was rebuilt on the same site after the destruction of its predecessor in 976. It took a long time in building ; twice "forty and six years ;" and its manifold decorations were not completed until a century had elapsed from the commencement.

The republic (for so Venice chose at all times to be denominated) ordered those employed in its construction, to spare no expense, and to erect a more splendid building than any then existing. Santa Sophia, at Constantinople, was chosen for its model, and the architects produced a church perhaps unparalleled as a whole in excess of ornament. It is covered with pillars

of porphyry, verd antique, &c., &c., and with pictures in rich mosaic, the gold ground of which adds much to their brilliant effect, especially where the light falls on them. At the exterior these are seen to much advantage; but the *tout ensemble* of the inside is heavy and sombre.

There are only two tolerable sized windows in the whole church; and those are very wide apart. There are a vast number of very small windows in different ranges, which suggest the idea, notwithstanding the importance attached to the name of Santa Sophia, that it must have some slight resemblance to a pigeon-house, if it served as a model in the particular of windows. The front of St. Mark's is surrounded by numerous statues; some are ensconced in a pointed kind of minaret; others are standing "all in the open air," as Plutarch, Nicodemus, Venus and Nebuchadnezzar are described to be in a well-known Irish poem. Saint Mark, as is proper for the patron saint, is in the centre.

Besides the objects I have enumerated, a variety of minor but effective decorations, add to the magnificence of this remarkable church; and, upon the whole, if the builders had made it considerably higher, they would have effectually executed the commands they received, and Venice might have boasted of possessing one of the most splendid edifices in the world, notwithstanding all the violations of good taste, complained of by the critics.

In the vestibule we saw persons on bended knees kissing a small-sized red stone, let into the tesselated pavement. On inquiring what this meant, we learned that it marks the spot where the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa humbled himself before the Pope, Alexander III., whose election to the popedom he had in vain tried to set aside, by getting a rival Pope, Victor XIV., a creature of his own, seated in the chair of St. Peter's. Alexander showed the most undaunted courage under adverse circumstances for the space of twenty years; at the end of that period, driven from everywhere else in

Italy, he sought refuge with the Venetians. At first he was received with great secrecy, but at length became their avowed and honoured guest, and his cause was openly espoused by the republic. The Doge Ziani, with an incredibly smaller force, boldly encountered the fleet belonging to the emperor, captured several vessels, and took his son Otho prisoner, who commanded the expedition. All overtures on the part of the emperor to obtain the liberty of the prince were rejected; nothing less was demanded than his coming in person to make submission to the Pope. As fire makes iron ductile, so can parental love bend the most obdurate natures. As the only means of having his son restored to him, the emperor acquiesced in the hard terms, the more readily, perhaps, because of his own recent and signal defeat by the Lombard league at the battle of Legnano. He set sail for Venice, and landing at the Piazzetta, was conducted by the doge, and other high officers of state, to the church of St. Mark's, where Alexander, in his

pontifical vestments, and surrounded by his cardinals, received his subdued and hitherto implacable enemy. Barbarossa, throwing aside his purple mantle, prostrated himself before his holiness, and the story runs, that placing his foot on the neck of the humbled emperor, he repeated the words of David—"Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder—the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet."

"It is not to *you*, it is to St. Peter," murmured the indignant prince; an observation that caused him still further mortification, for Alexander a second time more firmly planted his foot upon his neck, exclaiming, "It is both to me and St. Peter;" and thus, by the monarch's degradation, were the chains broken of his captive son.

The exercise of domineering power on the part of Alexander, and several other of the popes, oftentimes appears excessive to the readers of history, who cannot, however, fail to observe that much good was effected for man-

kind at this era by the homage paid to the tiara.

The church, as constituted in the middle ages, was no doubt a piece of machinery of divine appointment, to preserve in men's minds ideas connected with a spiritual kingdom, to rescue them from being wholly given up to things of sense, and altogether "of the earth earthy;" and by the possession of temporal power it was enabled to cultivate and cherish the nobler qualities of our nature—piety towards God, the love of learning, and the practice of self-denying virtue, and to uphold these against the counteracting influences of brute force and engrossing purposes of worldly aggrandisement of the feudal chiefs.

The church, notwithstanding manifold imperfections into which it fell, according as it departed from the great object of its mission, must be allowed to have befriended the interests of humanity at large; and let us not forget our obligations to it, although we no longer require the ceremonial discipline which

spoke trumpet-tongued to men's souls, and kept alive the spirit of veneration for a higher power than the mail-clad men of war, and which taught them, in common with all others, that, though invisible, there is a King of kings, and a Lord of lords.

It was on the occasion of the return of Ziani with Otho as his prisoner, that the exulting pontiff presented the Doge with a gold ring, desiring that on every anniversary of that happy day he and his successors should make known to all posterity that the right of conquest had subjugated the Adriatic to Venice as a spouse to her husband ;" and, notwithstanding that the Doge and his predecessors had previously possessed the most ample authority over the bride, during the following six hundred years the annual performance of the nuptial ceremony was never omitted. On every return of the Feast of Ascension, when the weather permitted, the bucentaur, a gorgeously gilt and ornamented barge, was in requisition. At one end of this vessel, in an elevated sort of throne

or chair, and beneath a canopy, sat the Doge, robed as suited so important a bridegroom ; he was accompanied by the officers of state and a numerous party of the senate and clergy. The splendid yachts of the foreign ambassadors followed, as well as the gondolas of the Venetian nobility, and an immense concourse of barks, galleys, and boats, filled with the populace. A discretionary power was entrusted to the admiral to postpone the espousals, if there were any symptoms or probability of the bride's being at all boisterous on the happy occasion ; which precaution was rendered farther efficacious for the security and enjoyment of all the parties concerned, by the patriarch pouring holy water on the waves, which was supposed to preclude the possibility of any unruly caprice. That being done, hymns were sung, and bands of music played, whilst the procession moved slowly on towards the Lido, a small island about two miles distant. Prayers were then said, and the nuptial benediction being given, the doge, as he dropped a gold

ring into the bosom of his bride, pronounced the words, “Desponsamus te, Mare, in signum veri perpetuique domini.” A soft murmur on the pebbly shore was received as her modest assent.

This pageant was ended by the French Revolution, which had brought various other kinds of divorces into fashion ; they even broke up the bucentaur, and ever since

“The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord ;
And annual marriage now no more renewed.”

But I can aver, without being justly liable to any charge of censoriousness, that she is a very smiling widow ; and though sometimes partially dressed in weeds, it is more from habit they are worn than from woe. They do not even affect a sombre hue, and albeit that her lord is defunct,

“Time writes no wrinkle on her azure brow.”

The visit to Venice of the Pope Alexander, which gave rise to this splendid and picturesque ceremony, was attended with other circum-

stances less memorable. The Doge Ziana accompanied the Pope to Rome, where the aged pontiff had the further satisfaction of seeing his competitor for the tiara renounce it at his feet in the halls of the Vatican. It was thought that the holy see could scarcely do sufficient to reward the Venetians who had so powerfully assisted in bringing about such glorious events, and accordingly distinctions were lavished on their prince, the chief value of which consisted in their want of substance. In imitation of the court of Rome the Doge was permitted to affix a leaden, instead of a waxen, seal, to all documents receiving his sign manual; and for this important grant a complimentary reason was given, that his official instruments might evince the *weight* of the Venetian senate.

Certain enviable symbols of sovereign power were also conferred on him; and henceforward a lighted taper, a sword, a canopy, (in reality an umbrella,) a chair of state, a footstool covered with cloth of gold, (both of which last he was privileged to use even in the pontifical

chapel,) silver trumpets and embroidered banners, announced the presence of the Doge. To his subjects at large, as a mark of general favour, a plenary indulgence was granted, on the condition of their hearing mass and confessing themselves in the church of St. Mark on the morning of the Feast of the Ascension. And thus laden with honours which, however intrinsically valuable, were not so oppressive as to impede his travelling, Ziani returned triumphantly to the enriched and exulting people of Venice.

LETTER XXXII.

Venice.

IN St. Mark's Place, exactly opposite the magnificent church I have attempted describing, stood another very fine church, called St. Giminiano, built after the design of the great Florentine architect, Sansovino. When the French came here in 1797 they were in great want of a ball-room, an accommodation with which they could not by any means dispense ; so down went this church, and it was replaced by an apartment of ample dimensions, of size sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. It runs the whole length of the building, which forms one end of the square. It has a very handsome exterior, and corresponds with the beautiful buildings composing the sides. These

are called the Procuratie, being at first designed for the occupancy of the procurators of St. Mark's church, who were comparatively few at the commencement of their office, but were afterwards considerably increased in numbers on various additional matters being consigned to their management.

The original Procuratie Vecchia is built of a kind of dark marble; the opposite Nuovo Procuratie is of the *pietra dura* of Istria. In the latter resides the Austrian governor, for whom it forms a splendid palace. The windows in the rear command a view of the Lagune and of the neighbouring islands. The Procuratie Vecchia is used for club-rooms and also for private dwellings. A fine wide colonnade runs along both the Procuratie, beneath which gay shops, confectioners, and coffee-houses, exhibit their tempting wares, and add to the attractions of this favourite promenade.

There is a charming garden attached to the governor's palace, to which we often resort; roses are blooming on one side, and on the other

the sea murmurs, not in such sweet cadences as the bulbul's song, nevertheless we are sensible of its *agrémens* whilst pacing the terraced walk. This garden is liberally opened at all times to the public until after sunset, when it is closed, unless on evenings that the band performs, when the gates are not shut until a late hour.

Very near to St. Mark's church stands its campanile, or bell-tower, a magnificent, and, for its purpose, a finely-proportioned square building, three hundred and thirty feet in height from the base. An open gallery is near the top, and clustered pillars support the pyramidal summit, on which is the statue of an angel whose widely expanded wings seem to denote that the moment is come for an upward flight.

It strikes me as not at all impossible that she may have assisted the "Starry Galileo" to understand aright what the Heavens were telling, for he frequently repaired to the top of this campanile to make his observations ; and it looks as if her instructions drew him here, for

at Pisa, where he was located, the tower is very nearly, if not quite, as high. I conclude he was not in those adventurous times as remarkable for embonpoint as in his latter days; otherwise the enterprise of Leander's swimming across the Hellespont, directed by the star-like light of Hero's chamber, would sink into insignificance compared to the arduous undertaking, the puffing and blowing Galileo must have experienced in scaling such a height to the rendezvous with his angel.

The campanile is built of light red stone or brick, and is but little ornamented excepting at the base and summit. It produces a most picturesque effect, in combination with the other objects with which it is grouped; but I must confess that in one particular point of view, where it is seen only in company with St. Mark's church, I was somewhat reminded of a fine, tall, overgrown youth, standing near to a grandly apparelled elderly parent.

Until I saw the campanile of Italy, I could

not have imagined as looking well a detached tower placed in proximity to a church. Accustomed as we are fondly to admire the church and steeple bound together, (like a couple in holy matrimony,) my ideas of propriety would have been shocked if it had been suggested to me that they, or rather their representatives, were to be seen separate and apart in any christian land. But notwithstanding that my associations with an English church (a country church especially) remain pre-eminently delightful, I can now admire extremely the campanile of Italy, its form both contrasts and combines so well with the church and swelling dome to which it forms an appendage.

The wide opening, or lesser square, called the Piazzetta, leading from St. Mark's Place to the water, with the ducal palace on one side, and on the other the noble building of the library and museum, is almost unique I suppose, in its richness; and the fine view from the end, where stand the two pillars I have al-

ready mentioned, (close to the sea they traversed from a far distant land,) forms altogether a combination of most remarkable beauty and grandeur. Vessels of various kinds, large and small, are seen on the blue waves, their masts and colours mingling in the distance with the churches, convents, and other buildings situated on the adjacent islands.

The domes, of which there are three, belonging to the church of Sta. Maria della Salute, and also that of St. Georgio, are of the softest dove-like grey tint (such as prevails in the interior of St. Peter's at Rome) which harmonises particularly well with all the varying colours of the sky. Both churches are the productions of Palladio's genius, and are seen in a most striking point of view from the Piazzetta.

The ducal palace was not always, at least during the later years of the republic, inhabited by the successive Doges; they had residences there, but they most frequently preferred living in their private houses. The Venetians were indebted to the spirited conduct of one of their

doges, Moncenigo, for the erection of the magnificent ducal palace. A former one had been in part destroyed, when an accidental fire had done the same ill office to St. Mark's church ; the rebuilding of which latter was commenced immediately after the disaster. But the Avogadri, (magistrates who were jealous of the power of the prince and had themselves great influence with the council and senate,) obtained a decree making it highly penal for any one to propose the rebuilding of the palace ; and a fine of one thousand ducats was affixed to the bare suggestion of such a measure. The gallant Moncenigo was not deterred by this certain pecuniary loss from speaking his mind ; he poured on the council table a thousand gold ducats, each worth fourteen shillings of our money ; and having thus purchased the full liberty of speech, he made such good use of it that he convinced the nobles, contrary to their previous determination, of the necessity of lodging their chief magistrate in a manner suitable to the dignity of the republic. The present edifice was in consequence

erected, which has ever since contributed so largely to the magnificence of Venetian architecture.

Hadrian and Augustus, and many others, built mausoleums for themselves, from which their bodies have been ejected ; and with which their names are either never, or but very seldom, connected. Augustus's tomb at Rome is converted into a sort of circus, a place of amusement for the canaille ; and, excepting with a guide-book in hand, who thinks of Hadrian and the castle of St. Angelo together ? The Doge Mancenigo, in causing a palace to be built for his successors, erected a noble monument to his own memory. Soon afterwards he died, at the age of eighty, so that there was no self-interested motive in the spirited part he took in forwarding a structure he could scarcely expect to inhabit for a single year.

The ducal palace was used for all the public purposes to which ours of St. James's is appropriated ; it was also the place of assembly for the senate and all the different councils. It

makes one shudder to think of the inquisitorial character of the latter, as set forth by the Count Daru. The giants' stairs, of white marble, led to their several chambers; at the top of these stairs, (hence denominated giants,) are the colossal statues of Mars and Neptune, the work of Sansovino, intended to represent the naval and military power of the state. They have been suffered to get very black and dirty, and from their present lugubrious aspect they might rather be taken for chief mourners at the mausoleum where lie entombed vestiges of the deceased honours of the republic.

It was close to, and on the landing-place where stand the pedestals of these statues, that each newly-elected doge, after having been carried round the piazza of St. Mark's, received the ducal corno or beretta, the ensign of his dignity. It was placed on his head when he reached the last step of the giants' stairs; to intimate that he had gone through all the gradations of office, previously to attaining the highest dignity of the state.

On the same spot where he had received the ducal corno was Marino Faliero beheaded. Like Guy Fawkes in his destructive designs against our houses of parliament, Faliero meditated the assassination, "at one fell swoop," of the grand council and senate; and probably, as his stomach had such great capacity for revenge, the lesser councils would have fared no better had he succeeded. It is conjectured that indignation at the extreme curtailment of the power of the Doge by which he was trammelled, combined with other causes of dissatisfaction, especially what he considered the too lenient, though in point of fact, sufficient punishment awarded to one who had affronted his young and recently married wife; all combined to exasperate him to the projected perpetration of his horrid purpose. He was an old man, and it had been well for him if, like Lear, his reason had altogether given way under the pressure of his griefs, before they engendered guilty desires of the blackest dye.

Faliero's palace, situated on the grand canal,

is still in excellent preservation. It differs very much from all the neighbouring palaces, which are mostly of elaborate and uniform architecture. Unlike them, the Faliero palace is quite irregular: it has several projecting apartments, with open galleries and long balconies, that remind one of a Swiss cottage, as if such had been converted into stone—in short, turned into a fossil remain, richly carved, either before or after the transformation, and in the recesses are flowers tastefully disposed; some Oleanders, just now in full blossom, give to it a pleasant, cheerful appearance, strongly contrasting with the sombre recollections that recur on seeing it, notwithstanding its present gay exterior.

It is remarkable that for a hundred years after the decapitation of Faliero all the successive doges were bachelors; from that time they appeared to have an instinctive dread of the fair sex, until a man of courage, (who, I suppose, like Croker noted in song, “wanted a wife to make him uneasy,”) the Doge Lo-

renzo Priuli, broke through the spell that had retained so many of his predecessors in a disconsolate condition, and in the person of Zelia Dandolo, a descendant of old Enrico, he presented a Dogaressa to the Venetians, whose joy at the event was unbounded. The pageants in which they delighted had, no doubt, from the absence of an exalted female, lost much of their splendour and attractions. On the occasion of the wedding ceremony at St. Mark's church hundreds were crushed to death in attempting to witness it. Something of the sort occurred at the ill-fated marriage of Marie Antoinette. But the misfortunes of the few did not impede the rejoicings of the many; for three successive days festivities of all kinds were carried on, during which the Doge and Dogaressa often made their appearance, and addressed in a gracious manner the guilds and companies assembled in honour of their nuptials.

The walls and ceilings of the halls and apartments of the ducal palace are most splendidly adorned with the paintings of Titian, with those

of his nephew and pupil Marco Vercelle, of Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, Palma, Paduanino, and Bassano. The subjects are principally taken from the history of Venice. The triumph of the Venetian arms, during the dogeship of Ziana, over the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, is brought conspicuously forward and done ample justice to by the genius of Bassano. The Scriptures and saintly legends supplied subjects which are executed in Titian's finest manner. The colours are still so glowing, that the canvas seems teeming with life and its belongings, far beyond which, however, the painter not unfrequently rises. The rich and ponderous robes of the doges, together with the old men's solemn visages, and those of their attendants in the foreground, all "of the earth, earthly," contrast well with the ideal beauty of the oft-repeated Madonna and her suite of angelic beings, which prove the painter's power of elevating our thoughts to visionary glories, as well as the excellence of his art in faithfully delineating inferior subjects, and sublunary magnificence.

The heathen mythology also found favour with the Doges; the pencils of some of the great painters have been employed on its stories. Amongst others of this description, Europa carried off by her disguised lover forms the subject of a most admired picture by Paul Veronese.

The first day that we went to the ducal palace, the hall of the senate was in just the same state as it had been left by that body in 1797, when they and their weak Doge were told by the French general, commissioned by Bonaparte to make the communication, that their political existence was at an end. The general and his suite were received by the senate seated, and dressed in their robes of state. Unlike the senate of Rome, whom the awe-struck invading Gauls conceived were gods, their descendants saw in the Venetians only feeble old men, when they informed the “potent, grave, and reverend seignors” that their republic of nearly 1200 years’ duration had ceased to exist. The large chamber was silent

and solemn. A double row of well-carved easy seats are there which an active imagination might have filled with some of the richly-robed gentlemen of other days who had occupied them. The Doge's chair, distinguished from the others, was in the centre at the further end from the entrance. On one side was the tribune, from whence, as in the French Chambers, the speaker addressed his audience. The walls are covered with paintings, some of them exhibiting bending monarchs before complacent Doges. These serve to point the moral of the scene, and to recall to memory the wise man's saying, "Behold, all is vanity."

The next time (after a short interval) that we visited the same apartment, the shadows of the past were banished thence, for it was turned, *pro tempore*, into a modern bazaar; boards were laid across the senators seats, and these served as tables for the exhibition of specimens of different kinds of manufactures, the productions of Venice. Silks and satins, parasols and perfumery, beads in every form

that could please the refined or savage taste, artificial flowers and wax-work fruits, occupied the places where the reverend seignors had sat to form plans for the aggrandisement of their own city and the fall of others. The busy admiring crowd did not appear to recollect that those antique walls had ever enclosed a different assemblage of persons from such as were engaged in displaying or viewing light wares. To disengaged spectators like ourselves, as a whole, it was an impressive scene; but we felt no disposition whatever to regret the change that had taken place, being persuaded that all descriptions of people, with, perhaps, some individual exceptions, are much happier in their present circumstances than were their predecessors, when uncertain horrors were abroad, and in no privacy or innocence could be found a security against them. Nobody knew whom to trust; suspicion haunted every mind; the dread of becoming the victim of dark and fathomless accusations, whether well or ill-founded, pervaded all classes; and the desire of safety for

themselves drove men to the guilt of being spies and informers for the destruction of others. Venice was fair to look upon, but, like the gourd which the prophet beheld in external brightness, within it was full of ashes and rottenness.

LETTER XXXIII.

Venice.

THE Grand Canal has always been the favourite place of residence of the Venetians; it is in fact a river about two miles in length, open at either extremity to the sea. In its course it takes a serpentine bend, and about the centre is crossed by a bridge, the famed Rialto,—not far from which there branches off another canal, the second in Venice in point of size and importance, called the Royal Canal.

By far the greater number of fine palaces, (as well as some churches and other buildings,) are situated on the borders of these two canals. They are in dimensions and appearance as superior to all the other canals as St. Mark's Place and the Piazzetta are to the passages or

streets, such as we should call lanes, which afford, as well as the canals, the means of transit from one part of Venice to another. Nothing but the extreme cleanliness of these streets could make them endurable. In this particular the abundant supply of water secures an immense advantage.

The houses at one side are situated upon canals over which are three hundred bridges, connecting the different parts of the city. At the other side the houses open on the narrow streets where alone shops display their wares; for although the people here pass a good deal of time on the water, they do not carry on their traffic on that element as the Chinese do in their junks. The principal street, leading direct from St. Mark's Place to the Rialto, is the Merceria, in which I cannot find a tithe of the charms that Evelyn described it as possessing when he visited Venice in 1645. "Hence I passed through the Merceria, one of the most delicious streets in the world for the sweetnesse of it, and is all the way on both sides tapestried, as

it were, with cloth of gold, rich damasks, and other silks, which the shops expose and hang before their houses from the first floore, and with that variety, that for neere half the year spent in this citty, I hardly remember to have seen the same piece twice exposed."

One might fancy it were Pepys, that first-rate judge of taffeties and Padua *soies*, instead of the author of the *Sylva*, who looked so narrowly into the patterns of the brocaded silks. He continues;—" To this add the perfumes, apothecaries' shops, and innumerable cages of nightingales which they keep, that entertain you with their melody from shop to shop, so that shutting your eyes you would imagine yourself in the country, when indeed you are in the middle of the sea. It is almost as silent as the middle of a field, there being neither rattling of carriages nor trampling of horses. This street, paved with bricks and exceedingly cleane, brought us through an arch into the famous piazza of St. Mark."

I did not try the experiment of shutting my

eyes as I passed along the great thoroughfare of the Merceria, but I am sure had I done so I should not have been, like Evelyn, transported in idea to the country. Neither the silence he observed nor the charm of birds are now to be found there; it is a very busy, bustling place, as full of life and animation as it is destitute of the gold and silver damasks, that, with the nightingales, won his fancy.

The palaces situated on either side of the Grand Canal are rich beyond description, and exhibit a great variety of architecture. Their foundations are necessarily, from the element in which they are based, of the solid Etruscan character. Most of them have two, and some three, gates dividing the front, for the purpose of affording different passages, as we have distinct means of access to our houses for servants and tradespeople. On either side of the gates are plain, iron barred windows, and, as in all palaces or considerable Italian houses that we have seen, the whole of the lower story is appropriated to offices, or servants' apartments,

with the exceptions of one large entrance-hall and a staircase. The second story, where are the principal chambers, displays a highly decorated range of windows and balconies.

Many of the palaces exhibit the beautiful symmetry of Palladio's architecture, and others the light elegance of Sansavino's; but amongst those that are most ancient, the arabesque style prevails, which is highly ornamental, more particularly as regards the windows, the intersections of which terminating in several points, that have been compared to the outside of a spur, impart a degree of richness only to be described by the pencil, especially to the centre window, which is always of immense size, and divided by pillars or pilasters.

Philip de Comines, ambassador from Charles the Eighth of France, was much struck with the magnificence of this city. Of the great canal he says, "Sure in mine opinion it is the goodliest street in the world, and the best built, and reaches from one end of the town to the

other ! The buildings are high and stately, and all of fine stone. The ancient houses be all painted ; but the rest that have been built within these hundred years have their front all of white marble, brought out of Istria, a hundred miles hence, and are beautified with many great pieces of porphyry and sarpentine. In the most part of them are at least two chambers, the ceilings whereof are gilded, the mantle-trees of the chimnies very rich, to wit, of graven marble, the bedsteads gilded, the presses painted and vermeiled with gold, and marvellous well-furnished with stuff. To be short, it is the most triumphant city that ever I saw, and where ambassadors and strangers are most honourably entertained."

The piety and virtue of the governors made at first as favourable an impression on the mind of the Lord of Argenton, as the externals of the triumphant city ; but after a few months' residence, he wrote, " Sure thus much I dare boldly say of them, that they are men of such

wisdom, and so inclined to enlarge their dominions, that unless they look to it in time, all their neighbours shall repent it too late."

The palaces, which excite the wonder and admiration of every stranger who passes along the "Canale Grande," are now, in condition and occupancy, as various as their architecture, which, for the most part, is of so solid a description as to retard the appearances of decay. The most splendid of three palaces that belonged to the Giustiniani family (one of the great names of Venice) is let out in apartments. On approaching it, one of our gondoliers invited us to enter and see it, telling us that he had his domicile there. Other palaces, whose symmetry was not made either for solitude or for the convenience of the humble, are hired by artists and persons desirous of obtaining a central situation. The Austrian government has found use for several of these noble dwellings. "Della Legazione" appears in large letters outside the Cornaro Palace; one of the younger branches of that ancient family having sold it, reserving to him-

self some of the upper chambers, in which we are told he is at present living. The *employés* of the Post Office also inhabit another fine mansion. There are, however, many of the largest palaces occupied by the legitimate owners, and a few of the best find good tenants in English residents.

From the altered destination of so considerable a number of the palaces, there is, perhaps, no part of Venice which exhibits such symptoms of its decline, as the chosen place for the dwellings of the rich and mighty princes who called themselves Republicans. Some of their families have doubtless sunk into poverty, owing to political changes; but in general, I believe, that the splendour of their houses not being maintained, may be attributed, in a great measure, not only to the alienation of property, but also to an alteration in the law. During ten years that the French occupied Venice they did away, as in France, with the rights of primogeniture, and, consequently, it has since frequently happened that great palaces were in-

herited in common by large families, instead of belonging by right to the eldest son. The revenues which supported the fabrics were likewise divided, and thus the law continues at the present time; for it was not the interest of the Austrians to change it, and thereby raise up a power in the state that might prove formidable to their authority.

Another alteration in the laws, which took place at the revolution, has most probably operated in decreasing the magnificent appearance of Venice:—formerly no citizen was permitted to hold property in any territory or state whatever, not belonging to Venice. No such interdict bound the citizens of the contemporary republic of Genoa to such centralization; they were always at liberty, as the Venetians are now, to purchase estates elsewhere.

Perhaps the most strikingly beautiful, and at the same time the most ruined palace, is that of the Foscari. It is situated conspicuously above all others, at the forward bend of the Grand Canal, commanding a noble view of a long vista

of palaces, as far as the Rialto on the one hand, and on the other of the wide opening between the church of the Madonna della Salute and the quay of St. Mark's into the ever busy harbour, that extends from the Dogana (a most picturesque building) to the public gardens; a piece of ground, not only planted, but made by the French. The forlorn appearance of the palace, where Henry the Third was a guest on his way from Poland to France, in 1574, and which is spoken of in history as "the noble palace of the Foscari," could not be viewed with indifference, connected as it is with events of the tragic interest with which Lord Byron has made us all familiar. But no heightening of circumstances, even from his pen, could represent the calamities of "the two Foscari," as being more severe than they were in sober truth and reality.

On our expressing a wish to land there, the valet-de-place, shrugging his shoulders, said, "There is nothing to see, it is all a ruin." We persevered in our purpose, however, and

the gondola landed us on the steps. We found the large entrance hall filled with great blocks, as if it were a stonemason's yard. On inquiring if they were intended for the repair of the house, we were told not, that it is past being repaired, and is used in the way we saw, from being convenient in size and situation.

The mason came forward, and offering to show some of the rooms, we followed him up stairs, to what was evidently the principal apartment. It is of vast dimensions, and there are some traces of former magnificence, although the pictures have been long since taken from the ceiling, and also from the ornamented compartments along the sides of the walls, where were inserted family portraits, judging from the inscriptions still remaining, which set forth the honours conferred upon different persons, who were ambassadors, admirals, Doges, and filled other important situations. These memoranda are at present like epitaphs on tombs that have been ransacked and left vacant. Besides portraits of the illustrious

members of the house, the apartment formerly contained some of the most remarkable pictures in Venice. Paul Veronese expressly executed for it the celebrated painting of the weeping family of Darius at the feet of Alexander, now in the Pisani palace.

We looked, *en passant*, into several rooms that are let to the poorest kind of tradespeople and artists, and were fast retreating, when our cicerone said there was a remarkable room that we had not seen. He opened a door, and we entered. All round it, in deep recesses, are half-length terra-cotta figures, representing certain members of the Foscari family. These could not, I suppose, be torn away without demolition, or they would not be left as they are, like mourners in their desolate house. Our guide also threw open another door of a large apartment, at the further end of which I saw some decorations on the wall that caught my attention. Near to it was a small uncurtained bed, which I concluded belonged to one of the many persons who, apparently for want of a

better, sought refuge in the decayed mansion. The cicerone now said, "La Comtessa Foscari."

I asked, "Where?" and pointing to a picture on a chair, which I supposed him to refer to, I said, "That is a Madonna."

The valet-de place, who had accompanied us, in rather an audible manner, whispered "That lady before you is la comtessa."

A feeble old woman, whom I had not till then observed, bowed significantly, as importing that *she* was the person alluded to. I made my very deepest curtsey, feeling awed by her poverty in a way that pomp or pageantry could not have effected. She offered me one of the few chairs, desiring me to sit near her. There was no sofa, nor any article besides the bed having comfort for its object. On hearing her speak, even a few words, no one could doubt that she is of gentle blood. Scanty, and almost tattered as was her dress, she had an air of dignity and grace that is not

always found to accompany satins and velvets.
A small table stood near with some books.

I was endeavouring to collect my ideas, so as to say a few words, when another ancient lady of similar appearance entered ; the countess said, " That is my sister, the Countess Inasio ; she is a widow, but I was never married."

This led to my saying the most *mal-a-propos* thing I could have stammered out (an unfortunate propensity that influences me on all critical occasions). I expressed a hope, notwithstanding her celibacy, (single blessedness I could not call it,) that there is some male heir of her illustrious house. She mournfully shook her head, implying thereby as much as Lord Burleigh in the play ever did by any such movement on his part ; she said,

" I have a cousin, but our fallen fortunes constrain him to earn his bread ; he is an actor of the drama, and I understand a good performer ; he is called by another name, one that

belonged to some of our connexions; he does right not to debase that of Foscari."

I endeavoured to remark that not a few illustrious families had been by the French, and other revolutions, thrown into altered circumstances; in short, I meant to imply that many persons of elevated rank were what Curran (alluding to some royal and noble French exiles) called "dismounted cavalry"—but without having, as you may suppose, the *gauchérie*, to attempt translating the witticism into Italian, which only occurs to me as I write, for in truth all the springs of compassion within me were moved to the utmost as I looked upon the noble lady, heir to the gaunt ruin of her once princely house.

I cast my eyes around to see if there were any valueless trifle that I could, by asking for as a remembrance of my visit, make a pretext for offering the poor contents of my purse. Alas! excepting the Madonna's picture, the room contained nothing but a few articles of the last and sternest necessity. I contrived.

however, (unobserved, I believe,) to slip a trifling matter underneath one of the prayer-books that lay near me ; and being really overcome by the spectacle of such misery, I expressed an apprehension that we were intruding upon the time of the ladies, and thanking them for their polite reception, we respectfully, I might almost say reverentially, took our leave.

Our spirits were depressed, so we postponed going to see other palaces, and returned to stay at home for the rest of the day, and not without having much to muse upon, connected with “the two Foscari.”

LETTER XXXV.

Venice.

A VERY superb building, erected opposite to the doge's palace, for the purpose of receiving Petrarch's library, now forms one angle of the governor's residence. The cherished volumes which Petrarch fondly hoped to transmit along with his name to posterity, are either lost, or no longer to be recognised amidst the sixty thousand which were transferred to the former hall of the great council, and of the adjoining hall of scrutiny, in the ducal palace. Petrarch's gift of books, or rather MSS., was most invaluable in every point of view, as it incited the Venetians to add to their store, and doubtless helped to create and diffuse a

love of letters. He was staying in Venice in 1362, and in the September of that year wrote to the senate—"I wish, with the good-will of our Saviour, and of the evangelist himself, to make St. Mark heir of my library." No objection arising in any quarter, his treasures were thankfully accepted, and amongst many invaluable manuscripts were copies of the works of Cicero, transcribed by Petrarch himself. If I recollect right, he showed for them an early predilection, thereby incurring his father's displeasure, who threw one of them, obtained with great cost of time and pains, into the fire on finding his son conning it, instead of applying to the crabbed mysteries of the law. Perhaps it was partly the attractions of Petrarch's manuscripts which caused, at a later period, Aldus Manutius to settle at Venice, to whose indefatigable labours the world owed the first editions of twenty-eight of the Greek classics.

The art of printing early attained great comparative excellence in Venice, which became, in

fact, the book-shop of the south, and still prints for a great portion of Italy and modern Greece, and we are told exports vast numbers of books to Germany and the north. The Venetians are also much employed, it is said, in publishing pamphlets which do not travel, being satires levelled at domestic absurdities, and written in the vulgar dialect. This dialect is spoken occasionally by all classes. We were amused at hearing an English gentleman's children talking it to their servant, who replied in the same; the smart and hasty inflections of the voices reminded us of the tones of our Welsh countrymen.

Although many persons of eminent talents and learning resorted to Venice, it does not, I think, appear that any men of literary genius were born here. The north of Italy produced the great poets of the country, with the exception of Tasso, but not one of them claimed Venice as his birth-place. It was left to the muse of painting to make rich amends for the absence of her twin sister. Had the Republic

chosen the painter St. Luke, instead of St. Mark, for their patron, we might be apt to attribute to his especial inspiration the surpassing excellence of the votaries of the pallet, but to no such partial influence can be attributed the mighty works of Titian, or Paul Veronese, Bassano, Palma, Tintoretto, and others, whose productions ever will be sources of gratifying admiration to such as delight in having the pages of history imprinted on their minds by the living colours of the painter's art.

In the apartments now used for the library, there are paintings of several of the important events in the early history of Venice; there are also others taken from different subjects;—amongst these, a paradise by Tintoretto, in which the figures are grouped in surprising variety. Opposite to it is the Last Judgment by Palma, in one part of which he placed his mistress in heaven; but either she was a coquet, or he fickle, (or both might have been the case,) for before he concluded the work he

deposited her in what Hamlet calls "the other place," where her charms are still much admired.

Around the frieze of the chambers are painted, *en buste*, in compartments, a series of the Doges, two of the seignors in each division. Having at different times heard much of the Doges' pictures, and knowing what eminently fine portrait-painters belonged to the Venetian school, I expected to find full-length, dignified, and noble figures of the men who had been the chosen chiefs of the republic, such as are represented in some of the historical pieces, instead of which I only saw a representation of their numerous heads placed on the walls near to the ceiling—a kind of loose, flying scroll connects each pair, the high, white-pointed caps of whom are the most conspicuous parts about them. The effect altogether is much the same as if a legion of the weird sisterhood were showing their faces in the clouds whilst meditating a descent upon earth. Truly I do not wonder that so many Doges for a century had

no spouse but the Adriatic, to whom, I think, all nuptial rites would have been permanently made over, if the ladies had possessed good taste. The heads of any set of country squires, with their pig-tails placed rank and file, would be more imposing, and less ludicrous, to my fancy, than these old fellows in their night-caps; for at the distance they are placed, the jewels that decked their berette are not apparent, and one might fancy them so many old Scotchwomen's head-gear. And yet Titian's pencil was employed on some of these worthies. He had executed various works that still adorn the ducal palace, and was rewarded with an appointment of some mercantile nature, about as well suited to him as the excisemanship was to Burns; its salary amounted to three hundred crowns. But besides performing the uncongenial duties of his office, he was bound to paint every Doge who succeeded during his life-time for eight crowns a head, to be paid by the Doge himself; and to this notable agreement we are indebted for the portraits of four

Doges, painted from 1545 to 1554. On the accession of Lorenzo Priuli, in 1556, (whose marriage caused such excessive rejoicings,) Titian, then in his 79th year, obtained permission to discontinue his task.

Of a far different description are other of Titian's paintings at the ducal palace, where some of our party have spent hours in surveying them. We have also gone several times to see a considerable portion of his great works at the Accademia delle Belle Arte, a building situated on the Grand Canal. It was the convent of la Carità, which the French transformed for its present purposes. The patron saint was dismissed and replaced by Minerva, whose statue is in the front of the edifice, placed on the back of a colossal lion. Each of her outstretched hands holds a crown, intimating the rewards conferred on the proficients in sculpture and painting. By this figure, some of us were reminded of one of the ladies on horseback, belonging to Ducrow's establishment, representing a classical person-

and I think that without seeing the productions of these masters in this and other public places in Venice, (including the churches, which are splendidly decorated with their works,) one cannot justly appreciate the magnificence of their art. Better judges than I am remark a general want of the pure taste which reigns in the Roman and Bolognese schools, as well as the sacrifice of correct design and composition to brilliant colouring and the power of distant general effect.

In the churches one has constantly to lament the darkness which now covers the deep tints of most of the Venetian painters; and even Titian's grand picture of the Ascension of the Virgin has, I think, too sombre a hue thrown over it. The masterpieces of the brothers Bassano raise one's estimate of their powers; and the fine scripture subjects found in the churches executed by that family, as well as by Bonifazio, Pordenone, and Conigliano, increase our admiration for the masters of the Venetian school generally, and make us wish

that more valuable specimens of their art were to be found in our English galleries.

We went yesterday to the Manfrini palace, situated at the junction of the Grand and Royal Canals. It is altogether very splendid, and besides being " painted and vermeiled with gold, and marvellous well furnished with stufte," it contains a first-rate collection of pictures, all in the best condition, and several of Titian's fine works, amongst which is a magnificent portrait of Ariosto. There is also one of Titian himself, but not from his own pencil. He is looking intently on his well known mistress, the daughter of old Palma, whose careless, unimpassioned air is in marked contrast to that of his deep seriousness ; one could fancy him just at the moment complaining that " Love reigns in every outward part, but ah ! he never touched thy heart." Another portrait completes the group ; it is of Giorgione, the painter of the trio, who died at the early age of thirty-three.

A small picture of The taking down from the

Cross by Raffaelle, is of surpassing excellence, and was probably intended to have been painted on a grand scale. It reminded us of the celebrated picture of Daniel da Volterra—"The taking down from the Cross"—which now fills one side of a chapel in the church of la Trinita de Monte, at Rome, and which at the time it was executed, disputed the palm with the first paintings of that period. From the resemblance in so many respects, it is not improbable that Daniel da Volterra studied this little group of Raffaele's in order to enrich his great work. Certainly, in simplicity and grandeur of design, as well as in forcible expression, his large painting appears a close copy of this miniature.

Raffaelle's genius has been like a body of light,—itself undiminished, while innumerable torches have been kindled at its flame. A splendid cartoon by him, as large as those at Hampton Court, represents Noah collecting his household, animals included, preparatory to entering the ark. He appears as if in the act of

soothing and persuading a reluctant woman to meet the exigency of the time, whilst she has the air of one very unhappy, who did not like to turn her back on friends and kindred, even for the security of “a floating prison.”

The palace contains many other fine paintings; but I will not weary you by attempting any further descriptions; for such are pretty generally admitted to be bores, and I cannot flatter myself that mine would prove otherwise, if carried to any length. At a short distance from the Manfrini palace is a suppressed convent that was attached to the church of the Frari. It now contains, in three hundred rooms, the archives of the ex-republic, which were formerly not concentrated, but deposited in different places. We were shown several volumes of letters from our English sovereigns. There is one, in externals very remarkable, from James I. to the Porte, more magnificently emblazoned with ornament than the richest missal I ever saw. Perhaps he thought it a judicious exercise of king-craft to gratify a sul-

tan's taste for splendour even in a letter. We were also shown a most haughty epistle from General Bonaparte, complaining of some insult offered by Venice, very much in the moderate spirit of the wolf that accused the lamb of troubling the water. It is dated in the fifth year of the French republic. The words, "Liberté et Egalité," are placed conspicuously at each of the uppermost corners of the first page. Some years afterwards, when he was emperor, he would probably have smiled, had he seen his manifesto, his motto being no longer "Liberté et Egalité."

But we found more interesting than all the sovereigns' letters submitted to our inspection, the famous Libro d'Oro, which multiplied itself into seventeen large folio volumes. For a long period there were no privileged classes in Venice ; all were equally eligible to fill the offices of state. But as in the vegetable kingdom there are lofty trees that tower above shrubs and bushes, so in the social world there must be some men to take a more commanding position

than others. This is an inevitable law of nature, arising in the first instance from the difference of superior natural gifts, mental and bodily, and afterwards, as society advances, proceeding from other inevitable combinations of causes. The feudal system could not exist in Venice, where there was no land for chiefs and vassals to exercise protection and service ; but, as there must ever be distinctions of some sort, the Venetians had the names of their most conspicuous citizen inscribed in a golden book. The first names inserted, and which have always retained pre-eminent consideration, were those of the families of the twelve Tribunes who had elected the first Doge in the year 697. These were called, profanely I think, “ *i dodici apostoli* ;” and along with the inscription of their names were those of six other families admitted. Then followed the names of four other persons who had signed an instrument (A. D. 800) for the foundation of the abbey St. Georgio Maggiore. These were called “ *i quattro evangeliste* ,” and along with six names of distin-

guished citizens, constituted a species of nobility, who were looked up to with respect, as were also the families which had given Doges to the state, and such persons as had rendered it services, none of whom, however, possessed any defined privileges or exemptions from common burthens. It is a remarkable circumstance that only two families of this first class, in fact, of the Tribunes, are extinct. The second class, whose names were enrolled A. D. 1297, were the members of the great council, four hundred and seventy in number. These were formerly annually elected by the people at large; but by a bold and energetic measure of the Doge Gradenigo, he got a law passed rendering them not only members of the council for life, but confining that distinction to their families. A bloody revolution appeared likely to follow this abrogation of the people's rights, but the conspiracy was defeated; and then followed the formation, at intervals, of that complex system of espionage, connected with secret tribunals and dark inquisitorial measures that

led to the perpetration of atrocities at the bare mention of which human nature shudders, and which were never fully developed until the French got possession of the fastnesses of the republic, and the pen of Count Daru brought horrors to light that made its fall, as a government, a subject for rejoicing.

The third class had their names enrolled in “*il libro d'oro*,” at a later period, (1378,) in consequence of their success as leaders of the forces that regained possession of Chiozza, an island of great strength, about twenty-five miles distant from Venice, which, after a long and severe contest, the Genoese had got into their hands, in spite of prodigies of valour performed by the Pisani and other heroes. The reduction of Venice itself must have soon followed this event, had it not been for the devotedness and sacrifices of the citizens in general aiding the combined efforts of Carlo Zeno and Admiral Pisani; when, by means of the hardest possible fighting, and the extraordinary skill and resources manifested by those leaders, the Genoese

were defeated, and Chiozza restored to the republic. As a reward to the most distinguished warriors on that occasion, thirty families were ennobled by their names being inserted in the golden book, from amongst whom, in process of time, were elected three Doges.

The fourth and lowest class of nobles originated at a later period, during the Turkish war, in the citizens, as well as the Candiates and other provincials, being allowed to have their names enrolled in the all-important book, on the payment of one hundred thousand ducats. This facility rapidly increased the number of the nobility, which ever after averaged at twelve hundred. An anecdote is recorded of a Doge recommending some citizen to have his name inserted in "il Libro d'Oro;" but the man, being modest, pleaded want of merit. "Have you not one hundred thousand ducats?" said the Doge. The answer was in the affirmative, and he added, significantly, "Is not that great merit?" He was not, it seems,

of Pope's opinion, that "worth makes the man."

In addition to the four classes that existed, and still exist in Venice, though their numbers are not increased as formerly, there was another, consisting of illustrious foreigners, who were honoured, as a mark of distinction, or in compliance with their own request, by having their names enrolled in the golden book ;—a less expensive way of showing respect than the common one of giving gold snuff-boxes !

The names of illegitimate persons were never admitted in the golden book ; which rule sometimes led to great embarrassments. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the only Doge ever taken from the fourth and lowest class of the nobility, was Manini—the last. He was feeble-minded, and unequal to meet the exigencies of his situation, like Abdallah,* the last of the sovereigns of Grenada, whose mother told him he did right to weep as a woman, for

* Abdallah was called Boabdil by the Castilians.

what he had not the courage to defend as a man. No moral or personal courage, perhaps, on the part of either prince, could eventually have saved their respective dominions from falling; although their incompetency doubtless accelerated the event. Venice had stores of provisions for eight months, during which time her invaders might have been kept at bay, and there were not wanting brave men ready to die in her service; but these were not suffered, by the weak seignory, to endeavour to repel the foe, and a government of eleven centuries fell without a blow.

I have somewhere read that the original "Libro d'Oro" was burnt by the French; but I could not get the *custode* to acknowledge this fact; he appeared angry at our supposing that such was the case, and he either is, or pretends to be, persuaded that the first of the seventeen volumes, of which he is the guardian, is the ancient root of the tree that extended to so many ramifications. Perhaps he may attribute to it some of the properties of the phœnix,

and conceive that it has arisen renovated from its ashes. Amongst the very earliest names we observed that of Foscari.

In the church of the Frari is a monument designed for Titian by Canova, which was executed by his mourning scholars for himself. It is not worthy of his genius, nor of being appropriated to commemorate it. A monument, we were told, is preparing for Titian. I doubt whether any epitaph that may be written will surpass the impressive and simple eulogy inscribed on a stone that forms part of the pavement of the church.

"Qui giace il gran Tiziano."

The tombs of several of the Doges are also in the church of the Frari, and are more remarkable for their elaborate workmanship and costliness than for their beauty. One of the best of them was erected to the memory of the Doge Moncenigo, some of whose descendants still retain, and are residents in a magnificent palace, situated on the Grand Canal, in which

Lord Byron resided during the time he passed in Venice. We adjourned there after leaving the church of the Frari.

It was said of Attila, who in one sense may be called the founder of Venice, that where his horse's feet trod the grass never grew. Of Lord Byron, it may be affirmed, that wherever his steps can be traced those places are fertile with associations. His poetic thoughts arise to our recollection everywhere that his genius passed over. Having obtained the requisite permission, we went through the handsome suite of rooms he had occupied. The table at which he wrote was pointed out to us. In one of the notes to "Childe Harold," he said "Every footstep of Laura's lover has been anxiously traced and recorded. The house in which he lodged is shown in Venice." But a few years have passed, and the importance attached to that house is merged in the greater interest felt with respect to the residence of the poet of England.

On the evening of the same day that we had

been at the Manfrini and Moncenigo palaces, we spent some hours at another of much note—that which was inhabited by “by blind old Dandolo,” the “octogenarian chief.” Over the entrance door is the following inscription:—

“Lares ne præterea, Viator,
Ducis Henrici Dandolo, Stremui, invicili
Quo—primum—moderante
Venetum Late, Gloria percerehuit.”

We were invited there to witness a *fresca* in honour of the arrival, at Venice, of the Arch-Duke Stefano. About the hour of sunset he and his *cortège* passed in their gondolas along the Grand Canal. A magnificent band attended, and such an immense number of gondolas as in some places completely covered the canal; every window and balcony on either side was filled with all descriptions of persons gaily dressed, and some few spaces, where the palaces or houses receded, as many rows as possible of chairs and benches were placed for crowding spectators. The archduke was hailed with lively demonstrations of pleasure, which he ac-

knowledged gracefully; he stood up in his gondola, and, with great appearance of satisfaction, bowed repeatedly to the assembled multitude. He is come to succeed his father, the Palatine of Hungary, in the government, and will divide his time between this city and Milan. The Prince Palatine is to reside in future in Vienna, it being thought advisable that the Emperor his nephew should have his assistance in the cares of government. The gentlemen who have had to transact business, or have been in company with the young Prince, make a very favourable report of his manners and general bearing. Behind the palace he occupies in St. Mark's Place, there are, as I believe I have already mentioned, very prettily planted gardens, which reach to the water's edge. On two or three evenings in the week a fine band performs, and he, along with the ladies and gentlemen belonging to his little court, walk undistinguished amongst the crowd, who are freely admitted.

We are told that a great degree of social en-

joyment is to be found in Venice during the winter. The governor has been in the habit of very liberally opening his house, and both wished and expected the upper classes to partake of his hospitality. Some marriages have taken place between Austrians of rank and consideration, and ladies of Venice. At the present moment, the magnificent palace of Carlo Zeno, which had got into a dilapidated state, is being repaired for a newly-wedded pair of this description. As the Sabine women banished hostility between their countrymen and the Romans, so the charms of the fair sex at Venice will, I think, produce the same good effects with respect to their kinsfolk and the ultra-montanes of Germany. Indeed, not only particular families have reason to be satisfied with the present *régime*, but from all we can learn and observe, the people at large are happy and well contented. I do not remember our once having met a beggar, although it is a recorded fact, that after Venice lost her dependencies, particularly the islands of Cyprus and Candia,

it was not uncommon for some members of the impoverished and too numerous nobility to obtain begging licences. They wore a particular dress whilst following their vocation, having their faces covered, with the exception of the eyes; hence the noble paupers were called *i vergognosi*—the shamefaced.

It is well known that the Venetians are permitted much more freedom than formerly, especially as regards speech, and in this point they have the advantage over their neighbours of Milan; because of their insular position, their murmurings and satires are disregarded; whereas, if such were unnoticed in any portion of the Milanese territory, the mischief might spread to a wide extent, as a spark sets fire to a train of gunpowder.

For some years after the final evacuation of this city by the French, and the occupation of it by Austria, we were told that it displayed an extreme appearance of depression, and was really a most forlorn looking place. But the present government is employing every means, and with

success, to revive its trade. Venice, like Trieste, is made a free port, and ships of many nations are again in its harbour, giving animation to the scene, and exciting renewed industry and enjoyment amongst the people, who strike me as being *en masse* the merriest set I ever met; they are all night long singing, as far as I can judge by the hours they keep me awake, not with songs "most musical, most melancholy," but with cheerful ditties, never exchanged for brawls or skirmishes.

It is to be regretted that Admiral Dandolo does not reside in the house of his great ancestor. One likes to see the shoot of the oak rise up on the spot where the decayed monarch of the wood had taken root. Although her glory has departed from Venice, she will ever be proud of the memory of her blind old chief, who, after his conquest of Constantinople, annexed to the title of Doge the high appellations of Despot of Romania, and Lord of one-fourth and one-eighth of the Roman empire; besides obtaining for Venice an exemption from the

payment of all tribute in the East, and for her Doges the additional honour of being permitted to tinge their buskins with the purple hue distinctive of the imperial family. On that occasion he might have said that he “cast out his shoe,” not over Edom, but Constantinople.

You may imagine that during the evening we were not a little pleased, when the admiral, accompanied by his daughter, a lovely young girl, joined our party. He is considered in all respects worthy of his name, and is in great favour with the imperial family ; notwithstanding which, we are told that he has retired altogether into private life ; the successive deaths of three grown-up children having deeply affected his health and spirits. He has left but one “sole daughter of his house,” who is never seen but in his company, and looks by his side like the flower that decks the grey time-worn tower. The admiral is about the age of the Duke of Wellington, and is most strikingly

like his Grace in appearance—a circumstance often spoken of by the English.

The account of the splendid fêtes that were given on the occasion of Zelia Dandolo's marriage to the Doge Priuli, occurred to me during the evening, and led me to think that should some royal lover woo and wed the fair Lucretia, the Admiral's daughter, great would be again the rejoicings and festivities in Venice.

Our hostess, Madame Namias, introduced us to Count Gradenigo, who bears also a memorable name, but with far different associations attached to it from that of Dandolo. Gradenigo's triumphs were not for, but over, the liberties of his fellow-citizens. The present representative of the noble family is a very pleasing person, with whom we had some interesting conversation.

The *fresca* altogether went off with great *éclat*. As it grew dark some beautiful fireworks were exhibited in the gondolas, and we

were much amused by the novel entertainment of the evening. Our hostess regaled us with ices and lemonade, and we separated at a late hour, having enjoyed extremely the *soirée*.

LETTER XXXVI.
— — —*Venice.*

INSTEAD of stands of carriages being stationed at certain distances, as in the other cities, there are here dépôts of gondolas at the most convenient places of resort, the principal of which is at the Piazzetta. A gondola in some respects resembles an Indian canoe that is hollowed out of a tree, but is not altogether so inartificially constructed, being made with great skill to suit its purpose of drawing very little water, of which there is not, in some parts, more than a few inches in depth above the marshy soil of the Lagune. A gondola is about thirty feet in length, and four in breadth. Both extremities are pointed, and turn up from the water, as

did one portion of shoes of very antique fashion, from the ground. The centre, which is two thirds of the length, alone touches the water. It is a most dismal looking part of the vessel, being raised and covered with black cloth, into which persons enter very much as a dog goes into his kennel. There are, however, comfortable seats in the enclosure, and windows at the side, which open and shut just as in a carriage.

The first glance at a gondola gives the impression of a hearse having transferred its fare to a boat. After execrating the funereal-looking affair, I was no sooner within its precincts than I enjoyed the shade it afforded from a burning sun; whilst in all directions the view was surprisingly little impeded, and the breeze fanned us most luxuriously. The black top of the gondola called coperta, is made to take off, and sometimes it is put aside altogether; or if the sun's rays are too ardent to allow of their unmitigated fervour, the sombre coperta is replaced by four poles, supporting an umbrella-like shade which, being light in colour, fringed and tasselled,

has a very gay effect, though it is by no means so good a defence as the other, against either extreme of heat or cold. A gondolier stands at each end, on a small board level with the uppermost part of the boat; their whole figures are thus seen against the sky and water, and nothing can be more graceful than their movements. Sometimes a single gondolier manages the concern, and in doing so, is still more picturesque, he looks at once so powerful and so agile. There is in Mr. R. M. Milne's poems a translation of some lines by Goethe on the gondola, amongst which are the following :

" Let me this gondola boat compare to the slumberous cradle,
And to a spacious bier liken the cover demure ;
Thus on the open canal through life we are swaying and
swimming
Onward with never a care, coffin and cradle between."

The gondoliers, who are also frequently fishermen, have at all times been an important body, to whom great consideration has been shown by the government. When the Doge Gradenigo,

in 1296 curtailed the rights of the electors, the representatives of the people, (and by whose preference of Thiepolo, a rival candidate, he had nearly lost the dogeship,) the higher classes were indignant at having so many, not their equals, placed in some respects on a level with them, by all persons composing the grand council at the time, being made permanent members thereof, and transmitting the same privilege to their heirs. A deeply-concerted conspiracy was the result, which was frustrated. The Doge, to prevent further hostilities, laid himself out to conciliate all parties : he bestowed offices and conferred favours on the upper orders, whilst for the populace, the gondoliers and fishermen especially, (somewhat in the spirit of the Spartans, who made their slaves drunk for the purpose of mocking them,) he gave an annual feast, at which he presided, and freely admitted them to embrace him. The cajolery was not thrown away : all past displeasure towards him on their part, merged in the satisfaction occasioned by such hilarity and

condescension. Nor would they dispense for a long succession of years with similar festivities. At length Contarini, one of the following Doges who disliked acquiescing in the personal encounter with his townsmen, to which so many of his predecessors in office had submitted, tried to put an end to the farce, and on the accustomed day did not make his appearance ; but so violent a tumult ensued, the unwilling prince, from fear of serious consequences resulting to the state if he remained inexorable, was compelled to come forth and have the dreaded kiss inflicted. His opposition had awakened the determination of every gondolier and fisherman to exercise his full privilege, and no individual amongst them allowed the suffering Contarini to escape the hateful contact. The Doge, however, rendered it as little offensive to himself as possible under all the distressing circumstances of the case, by wearing a mask. The popular triumph over his squeamishness was celebrated by a painting being placed in the church of Sta. Agnese, representing the ceremony, in which,

malgré lui, he had borne so conspicuous a part.

The inhabitants of Venice were, from time immemorial, divided into two parties, called the Castellani and the Nicoloti, according to the portion of the city in which they resided ; but the spirit of partizanship rested with the populace—the rabble and the gondoliers and their families especially, to please whom the nobility manifested occasionally, a participation in their sentiments. But to balance well the opposite factions was the object of the higher classes—not any real community of feeling. Amongst the gondoliers this old feud still exists in full force ; they have preserved their distinctive character, whilst revolutions have passed like obliterating waves over other once equally demonstrated but now extinct divisions of society. The gondoliers are at present, as they were formerly, either Castellani or Nicoloti, and live as did their respective ancestors in different parts of the city, and will not on any account intermarry. 'Tis said some humble Romeos and

Juliets, whose hearts throbbed with ill-directed passion, have been not less severely tried than the scions of the houses of Montague and Capulet, if “the simple annals of the poor” are to be credited.

The reigning Doge in by-gone times was necessarily a Castellano on account of the site of his palace, and to counteract such great influence, some particularly shrewd and clever gondolier on the Nicoloti side was yearly elected an anti-doge, and like our English Mayor of Garrat was invested with a mock authority, and attended the procession of the marriage of the sea with a burlesque court which added considerably to the pageantry of the spectacle.

When Henry III. of France, in 1574, visited Venice on his route from Poland, there were great entertainments made, in some of which the gondoliers bore a part. On one occasion the king viewed from his balcony a pugilistic combat between the Nicoloti and the Castellani. Two hundred champions on either side contested the bridge dei Carmini, by the prowess of their

fists. Many of the leaders were precipitated into the canal below, much to the amusement of the princely and noble spectators; at length his majesty, willing to content both parties, ordered a suspension of hostilities, and each was satisfied that victory would have been declared for them had the contest been finished.

Even at the present time some royal spectators take an interest in the feats of the gondoliers. During more than four centuries and a half, there had been uninterruptedly an annual regatta at Venice, at which the gondoliers of the Castellani and Nicoloti were the candidates for prizes. The victors (like the Doges) always had their portraits painted for their families; those portraits are still preserved by the descendants of the two factions with religious care, as well as every other emblem of success. The son or daughter of a conqueror, in those by-gone feats, would not be suffered to marry into a family, even of their own party, who could not boast of similar honours. We are told it not unfrequently happened that young

couples ardently attached, were obliged to postpone their marriages (sometimes *sine die*) until the lover himself, or some sufficiently near connexion, was enrolled amongst the list of the fortunate competitors; and if it be true that “the course of true love never did run smooth,” many young hearts may have suffered deeply from the rigors of such social enactments.

I am not aware of the gondoliers having any Libro d’Oro for the insertion of the names of their most fortunate members, but they certainly possessed some equally authentic method of permanently recording their distinctions, so as not to be imposed on by any false patents or surreptitious claims on the part of pretenders to the coveted rank. How ludicrous we sometimes find our own established ways of judging and feeling if only the persons concerned are changed, and of a different class from ourselves! Pope says, that angels view a Newton as we regard an ape.

The gondoliers, to their honour, showed a more determined spirit of resistance to the

French in 1797, than did the weak nobility, and to a man they were willing to sacrifice their lives in making the attempt to preserve the freedom unimpaired of the ocean queen of cities. The hands were strong, but the heads were feeble ; and when the French arrived and performed their burlesque antics respecting equality and freedom, one of their first acts was to prohibit regattas, the established amusement of the people for nearly five centuries. It was then that the scriptural legend on the gospel held by the lion of St. Mark, was erased, and the vague catchwords of revolution, “ the rights of man and citizenship,” were substituted in its place, which a gondolier observing, remarked that “ the lion for the first time had turned over a new leaf.”

The French doubtless feared the mustering of the gondoliers. From the year 1797 until 1841, no regatta had been seen in Venice; but last year there was a re-commencement of this favourite amusement, and it is a fact that the suspension of rivalship for so long a period was found not to

have abated one jot or particle of the animus which formerly filled the breasts of the contending factions. Gondoliers belonging to the Castellani and Nicoloti parties came forth, evincing undiminished zeal and ardour. Although most of their respective numbers were born during the interregnum, the parent fire, unquenched, and glowing brightly as ever, had descended to their offspring !

The colour of the Castellani party is red, and that of the Nicoloti black ; one is reminded of the blues and greens of Rome and Constantinople ; and an English gentleman of our acquaintance here, whose gondola is rowed by his own servants, was told by them that they, being Nicoloti, must leave his service if he required them to wear any portion of red in their habiliments.

The second anniversary of the revived regatta took place about a fortnight before our arrival. Some members of the royal family of Austria caused the renewal of this national entertainment, which was honoured by their presence ; but it

nevertheless was this year a failure: one of the contending parties evinced such ill will, hostility and unfairness, that several fracas ensued, and offenders were punished by temporary imprisonment.

Another description of persons of the same class in life as the gondoliers are very conspicuous and picturesque in Venice, the water-women, none of whom are natives of the place. A Venetian woman would not be so unmindful of her dignity as to carry about pails of water from the Pozzi or wells, which are locked and let out on hire. From the mountains in the neighbourhood of Cenida and Longerone, bordering on the Tyrol, young, blythe-looking, active girls come to Venice for the like purpose that " Jamie went to sea, to make his crown a pound." They enter on the arduous business of carrying fresh water from the reservoirs, which occupation they commence at an early hour of the day; there never is a chance of mistaking them for any of the ordinary inhabitants, for besides the striking elasticity of their move-

ments and animated air, they wear a uniform dress, short gown, and petticoats of bright colour, a round hat, (such as our Welsh peasantry exhibit,) put on in a peculiarly smart way over plaits of hair which protrude luxuriantly beneath it at the back of the head. In winter the hats are of beaver, and in summer of straw, and in every season always decorated with a bunch of flowers.

These comely girls never settle here ; they are remarkably well conducted, and sure as the carrier pigeon makes for its destination, each one returns to her mountain home, and to the lover for whose sake she has wandered thence, as soon as a sufficient competence for married life has been acquired. We are told that no instance has occurred of any one of them remaining permanently in Venice, unless arrested by the cold hand of death ; and they invariably go back uncontaminated by the habits of a city where, it has been, said that

" Cupids ride the lion of the deeps ;"

they escape hence when their object is attained, as a bird from a cage, who joyfully regains freedom, and soars into a congenial world far from the prison abode, only endured and never loved.

LETTER XXXVI.

Venice.

YESTERDAY we went to see the Arsenal, which is a very striking feature in this city. The entrance is situated between two towers, which are not, like most towers, in "sober livery clad;" these are of a bright red colour, retaining the air of triumphant domination which once justly belonged to them, when issued thence men and ships which went forth conquering and filling the world with amazement at their achievements. The Arsenal and its various accompaniments cover an island between two and three miles in extent. It includes docks for the building of vessels, besides being the depository for ammunition and arms of all descriptions.

On landing from our gondola we were called upon to show our passport before we could be admitted. Immediately in front is a motley group, consisting of several finely sculptured lions of different sizes, varying to lesser dimensions, from one of huge colossal stature, torn, as an inscription informed the world, by the hand of victory from the Piræus at Athens. Placed above the lions and their mates is a range of our old acquaintances, Minerva, Ceres, Mars, and others of the ex-dynasty of Olympus, who wear very much the air of some gay party of visitors arrived to inspect a menagerie. Over them all is the winged lion of St. Mark, who looks as if he still were "victorious, happy and glorious," as in the days when were humbled before the standard he emblazoned some of the great powers of the earth.

Within the portico the first object we saw was a statue of the Virgin and our Saviour, which serves to recall one's thoughts from the Heathen to the Christian world. Their heavenly aspect, bespeaking peace, love, and good-

will to mankind are, however ill suited to a place where the implements and appendages of deadly warfare meet the eye at every step.

We were conducted to large halls full of ancient weapons and suits of armour, all looking rather rusty. Amongst the latter is a plain suit presented to the Signory by Henry IV. of France, when his name was written in the Libro d'Oro, and other more substantial marks of favour were shown to him by the Republic before his throne was securely established.

The officer who led us through the apartments, said that everything worth taking the French had carried away; and on our expressing surprise at their having left behind the armour of their favourite monarch, he laughed as he replied, that they only cared for what would produce money; according to his account, in their estimation the value of each thing "was just so much money as 'twould bring." They left the standard taken from the Turks by the Venetians at the battle of Lepanto, as well as the lanterns appended to the Turkish admiral's

ship; but they broke up the dearly-prized vessel of the state, the Bucentaur, for the sake of the gilding. It used to cost £5,000 to regild it whenever that process was found necessary; but when broken up it could not have produced a quarter of that sum. The Venetians have made, on a small scale, an exact model of the ancient barge, which had on so many gala days for centuries contributed to their amusement and imparted splendour to their aquatic festivities. It stands, like a pretty toy in a glass case; but the actual chair in which the Doge was placed on the occasion of his espousals is still in preservation, and I sat in it for some minutes without feeling any of the trepidation or misgivings which disturbed Jenny Dennison when the seat of “his majesty of glorious memory” was invaded at Tillietudlem, for we were invited by our conductor to judge by our own experience how easy was the chair appointed for the Doges when they went, like most other princes, (happily there are some exceptions,) not a wooing, but to wed.

In the latter days of the Republic, when the thunders which had formerly been sent abroad, startling kingdoms from their pro-
priety, had ceased to issue from the Arsenal, it was made a place of reception and entertain-
ment for illustrious visitors. Where once cannon had been manufactured, and “grim
visaged war” was alone thought of, the pipe
and viol succeeded, sending forth mirthful
sounds inviting to the gay dance. The Arsenal
was made the scene of balls and banquettings.
It had long before the arrival of the French
ceased to be the vast forge from whence pro-
ceeded such thunders, as in days of yore had
laid prostrate and subjugated cities.

The destination of the Arsenal at different periods might in some measure be considered to run parallel with the history of Venice itself; when she not only ceased to conquer, but lost the fruits of former victories, and her commerce declined, she gave herself up to festivities and amusements which too often degenerated into vices. In the latter days of the Republic every

pretext for the giving of fêtes was laid hold of, and it has been said, that “ scarcely did a sunrise upon the Lagune uncelebrated by the pomp of some religious or political festival ; the whole year was one continued holiday, in which amusement appeared to be the professed and serious occupation, the grand and universal object of existence among their inhabitants.”

Besides the numerous fixed and customary ceremonials, the accession of a new Doge, the arrival of a foreign ambassador, or any other circumstance, was hailed with joy which afforded occasion for indulging the popular taste. The carnival became a period of extreme licentiousness. Masks were very generally worn, and seldom fewer than fifty thousand strangers from all parts of Europe flocked to Venice to enjoy the sports of Saint Mark's. Gaming grew into a direful habit amongst the upper classes, who quite lost the sense of dignity by which they had been distinguished ; insults of the grossest kind might be offered to them with impunity. Other evils followed, or rather

were contemporaneous, and altogether bowed the once noble spirit of independence of the Venetians; so that when the spoiler came, he found their city weak and powerless, enthralled by vices and pleasures, looking, when dressed with the trophies of former times, and in the midst of her festivities, like a victim garlanded with flowers ready for the sacrifice.

Some few Austrian ships are at present being built in the docks, and a still greater number will probably be built in future, as the commerce of Venice is certainly reviving. The French, who recklessly destroyed the barge which had for centuries contributed so largely to delight and amuse the people, constructed two of great magnificence for Bonaparte and Josephine. These are much more elegant than was the heavy Bucentaur, which, however, was endeared to the Venetians by so many proud recollections. The royal barges are kept in great preservation, and only used when the emperor and empress of Austria or other sovereigns visit Venice.

Amongst the curiosities in the Arsenal we were shown a model of the submarine structure, consisting of piles of wood necessarily laid close together preparatory to any house or palace being erected in Venice, and we were told that quite as much labour was employed in making the foundation before a stone appeared above the water, as afterwards in raising the immense buildings of which the city is composed.

Having seen all that is most interesting in the Arsenal, we returned home to an early dinner. The afternoon was excessively close and warm, so we again stepped into our gondola to seek a fresh breeze on the water. After being rowed about for some time, we directed our course to an island between two and three miles distant from Venice, where stands a large and celebrated Armenian convent, on the steps of which we disembarked, and immediately entered into cloisters surrounding a delightful flower garden, where the redundant roses, weighing heavily on the trees, were trained tastefully, as if they belonged to a lady's

parterre, and not suffered to be “a wilderness of sweets.”

The principal of the establishment, whose name is Paschal Aucher, gave us a most gracious reception. He is a native of Armenia, and a particularly fine, happy looking man between sixty and seventy years of age. He left his country at an early period of life to come for instruction to the seminary, at the head of which he is now placed, which in some respects, but not in all, resembles an ordinary convent. He often travels to distant countries; he has been twice in England, and speaks our language fluently. Thirty young men, Roman Catholic Armenians, are educated under his superintendence. They are at present gone for three of the summer months to another residence owned by the society on the mainland. His countrymen, generally speaking, he said, are of the Greek church, but many also belong to the Roman Catholic, or, as he called it, the Western Division.

At one end of the cloisters there is a marble

sarcophagus, containing the remains of the founder of the establishment, and another of a similar description corresponding in size and situation, which a gentleman, residing in England, had erected for his future interment; “but,” said our Cicerone, “it is not now very certain that he will honour us by being buried here, for he has lately quarrelled, and gone to law, to get from us the control and management of the property which his father bequeathed to our body for the establishment of an Armenian school in Venice. The case has been tried in England, and I this day received letters informing me that we have gained the suit.” The old gentleman laughed heartily, and congratulated us on having such wise and impartial courts of law in England. We told him it was possible that his opponent does not just now think so highly of them, which he admitted was very likely; when “self the wavering balance shakes ‘tis rarely right adjusted.”

He next conducted us to the library,—a large and most delightful room; I think it was

Cicero who said that a house without a library is like a body without a soul. Here is no want of informing mind, for the numerous shelves are well filled, and the whole apartment as airy, cheerful, and comfortable in all respects as if it belonged to some of our own noble mansions. There was one thing alone I could have wished away. A mummy of great antiquity, which perhaps had walked about "in Thebes's streets three thousand years ago." It is placed upright in a glass case. The external wrappings are still bright and whole; but the face, "where tears adown the dusky cheek have rolled" was awful to look upon. When called hence, 'tis surely better to be no more seen until "this mortal shall put on immortality," and that our care should alone be "to keep the soul embalmed and pure."

We gladly turned from the hideous specimen of Egypt's art to observe a table, at which our host said Lord Byron had sat for some hours nearly every day during four months that he was learning the Armenian language,—a know-

ledge of which he at length attained, though with difficulty, for he was by no means quick in making the acquisition ; a circumstance at which his language master did not seem surprised, because he conversed with him so frequently on subjects connected with his own mental sorrows. The good monk did not by any means boast of possessing Lord Byron's confidence, but it was evident he felt deeply for him, and had endeavoured to soothe his perturbed mind by presenting to it the consolations of religion ; and perhaps the holy converse which tried to calm the tumultuous waves of passion may have had its effect in speaking peace to his soul. It was pleasing to us to observe that the venerable man evinces the most affectionate attachment to the memory of our great poet, to which we also gave a sigh as we left the apartment so often honoured by his presence.

We then went to a much smaller room, the depository of a rare and curious collection of manuscripts, amongst which is a copy of the

Bible, said to be one of the oldest extant. There is a printing establishment in the convent, and we saw proofs of its clear type in some well-executed volumes, one of them the "Paradise Lost," translated into the Armenian language by our host, whose bright countenance, as well as his lively conversation, indicates a highly intellectual and fully exercised, but not over-worked mind. The book is dedicated to Lord and Lady William Russell, who, we were told, had both learned with great facility the Armenian tongue. We were also shown a volume consisting of specimens of a page in length, extracted by the good monk from various works in twenty-four languages, with all of which he is acquainted; these are each translated by different persons into English; one of them is by Lord Byron, from an Armenian manuscript Bible.

At length we took leave of the dignified and obliging Paschal Aucher, having had the pleasure of receiving from him a kindly expressed invitation to repeat our visit.

At a short distance from the island of the Armenians is another called St. Serviglio, where are situated a convent, a lunatic asylum, and an hospital. A combination that will not allow of its being classed amongst the fortunate islands. The resident monks of the order of St. Jean de Dieu, have the charge and superintendence of their afflicted fellow-men. At one of the windows dei Pazzi, (a word which, I believe, is equally applied to fools and madmen,) we saw peeping through strong iron bars some sad woe-worn looking persons, one of whom was singing wildly and mournfully. I thought of the plaintive air of, " My lodging is on the cold ground, and very hard is my fare;" the touching words of which, it is said, were first heard in the cell of a lunatic. Another unfortunate inmate seemed trying to burst through the iron grating, whilst he screamed to us not to approach the convent, or he would complain of us to the English consul. We had no wish just then to enter the abode of misery, and from the unavailing contemplation of some

of the most distressing ills that flesh is heir to, we gladly sought refuge from the melancholy associations in surveying the glorious scene before us. The sun was preparing to sink behind Venice, and was surrounding it with resplendent light, reflected in answering colours along our path upon the water. Some far distant islands, which we had hitherto not perceived, seemed newly risen, and were sparkling like gems of ocean, whilst many a white sail and dark gondola were basking in the mirrored rays.

We directed our course to the island called Lido,—a long, narrow neck of land which separates the Lagune from the open sea,—where some portion of the Crusaders are said to have assembled when the whole armed population of Europe were first summoned to join in a perilous and romantic warfare in the East,—the consequences of which were to many states so various and important, besides giving a new character to some of our social habits, which still leave traces of those long bygone days. The smouldering energies of men's natures were

aroused, and diffused their influence far and wide by means of the hermit of Picardy, who uplifted the cross and excited them to action. Then fresh impulses were imparted to commerce ; the spirit of enterprise and chivalry pervaded the civilised world ; poets' visions were of generous deeds, of heroism and conquest ; and above all, religious feelings were kindled by the ardent hopes and fears which clung around the holy sepulchre. All were elevated in purpose and awakened to new interests by the forcible appeals of the eloquent old man who bore the sacred emblem of our common faith. How wonderful are the effects enthusiasm can produce ! what dense masses of human beings it is capable of driving into mighty and rapid movements ! In the moral world it is like what steam is in the physical, an agency of astounding enormous power for good or evil. The Princess Anna Comnena, in describing the first crusade, said, “ Europe was loosed from its foundations and hurled against Asia.” What would have been the royal lady’s

surprise had she seen the poor emaciated form of the hermit, and been told that he it was who gave the first impulse to the moving myriads, whom she compared, from their numbers, to the stars of heaven.

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We landed on arriving at the Lido, and there saw hay-making, and young people throwing it about, as I suppose they do all the world over. The frolicsomeness and lightsome glee to which it disposes everywhere the juvenile portion of our species, seemed heightened by the novelty, to Venetian citizens, of such rural pleasures. On returning from our walk on the opposite shore, where we had been refreshed by the open sea breezes, we found the same groups apparently untired by their mirthful sports, and the hay being still thrown far and near by their joyous movements. We were proceeding in a loitering mood to our gondola, when we perceived at a short distance from the hay-makers numerous flat stones laid even with the ground, some of which were deeply embedded

in the green turf. On examining them we saw those emblems of mortality, which speak to our souls a common language were combined with Hebrew inscriptions, cut in the stone; and on inquiry we learned that this has been from time immemorial the burying-place of the Jews. That wonderful people, living and dying in distant lands, are never in their hearts exiled from Jerusalem. Their graves, as they lay before us on a common footpath, trampled upon by every passer by, bespeaking abandonment and desolation, and near to Venice, could not be viewed with indifference by any one who has felt, as we have been made to do by Shakespeare, for the indignities endured on the Rialto which lashed the spirit of Shylock into cruelty and revenge. However we may regret that the Jews do not embrace the faith their long-desired Messiah brought on earth to bless mankind, still we are impressed by the sublimity of a people oppressed and persecuted as they were, remaining unaltered amidst the changing destinies, the rise and fall of the kingdoms where

their tents, as they fondly hoped, were pitched but for a season. Yet generations passed away and found them the same, abiding with an unswerving spirit of endurance the pitiless storms of accumulated wrongs and injuries by which they were assailed, rather than turn from worshipping God after the manner of their fathers. Wherever they are scattered, wide as the winds of heaven can disperse the lightest atoms, they bear testimony to the wonders achieved for their race by the one true God; and men in all degrees of latitude are taught an impressive lesson by their unanimity under every variety of circumstance in attesting the validity of the Old Testament, which is the depository of the divinely conferred evidences of the glad tidings of the Gospel.

We left the Hebrew graves, our thoughts filled with Shylock and his race, and by the time we were again upon the water the moon had risen above the domes and palaces of Venice. The more distant islands that we had seen bathed in sunshine were vanished; we be-

held instead, in one direction, the Tyrolese Alps, looking "softly dark and darkly pure," and before us the faint distance was bounded by the Euganean hills, amongst which we had lately passed some interesting hours.

As we advanced, the Ducal Palace, seen against the sky, wore a dark and solemn aspect, looking as if it represented the sombre and appalling power associated with it in past days, when an angry decision issuing thence, perplexed nations and chilled the bravest hearts with fear.

The magnificent clock of St. Mark's Place was striking nine when we landed. It is the custom at present, for the higher classes especially, to walk on the Piazzetta near the water's edge on such evenings as they are not attracted by the performance of the fine Austrian band in the governor's garden. We were greeted, on stepping from the gondola, by some of our acquaintances, whom we joined in the promenade. It was not long before we observed how dense and dark were the clouds

behind the church of St. Mark's, which mingled with them indistinctly, as if it formed part of the sombre mass. In front was the full moon, risen high above the water, casting a line of bright rays along its rippling waves. Some vessels of a noble size and bearing, others smaller and less important, were variously disposed, having portions of them brought into strong light, while the rest were in shade. In several instances the fires on board displayed men's figures and occupations with a lively force to which only a pencil like Rembrandt's could have done justice. The full light of the moon falling on the two great pillars near to the water's edge, and also on the Ducal Palace, showed in surprising clearness every column, arch, and fine portion of the unrivalled richness of the stone fretwork of the splendid edifice.

No additional beauty to such a scene could we have imagined; but suddenly lightning burst forth behind St. Mark's church, converting the dark massive clouds there into one blaze of light, on which was traced in wondrous per-

fection every minute particle of the rich, varied, and complicated outline of the building; its several domes, pinnacled statues, with the arabesque ornaments around them, were presented vividly to our view. Flash after flash succeeded, and not only was the high Campanile given, as it were, a crown of glory, and the angel surmounting it shining garments, but the churches, across the water, of St. Georgio and Santa Maria della Salute, with their attendant buildings on opposite islands, which were not previously visible, looked as if suddenly arisen and composed of molten silver. Old things seemed passing away, and as if a new earth, and all that it was to inherit, were assuming a splendid garb, such as had not entered into the mind of man to conceive. The statue of St. Theodore, which is on one of the colossal granite pillars, was bathed in light; it looked as if the saint were standing between heaven and earth, bearing some mandate from above. On the other pillar was the winged lion, so full of life and motion that he seemed

as if just springing from the moon to join the new order of things. Then deep, long, and loud rolled the thunder, and darkness regained entire possession, save where the moonbeams fell. But the transition was, as before, startling ; the lightning increased, and flashed again and again, its pervading lustre causing, I had almost said, "intolerable day." I never saw the sun's steady radiance produce anything approaching to such dazzling brightness.

Admiring crowds seemed spell-bound by the wondrous scene, and, late as the hour became, no one was disposed to depart from the resplendent glories of the place, until a heavy shower of rain sent us to our homes, to muse on what appeared more as a dream of things that might belong to some world of spirits, than matters of actual observation.

Thunder and lightning are of frequent occurrence here. We seldom or never find any day very warm and close without experiencing both before the end of it, though commonly of a much less powerful description than we were

favoured with last night. Persons are not deterred in the least from walking about as usual whilst the jarring elements are at work,—they tax not them with unkindness ; on the contrary, they “ bless the useful light ” whose appearance in their skies brings renovating freshness, and removes weight and oppression from the atmosphere, and but for which ebullitions of nature Venice would, I think, be an intolerable place in summer. For much inconvenience, however, one may find compensation in the delicious evenings that may be passed on the water, where the magnificence of the heavens is beheld in such vast and all-surrounding beauty and sublimity.

LETTER XXXVII.

Cortina.

A LONG time has elapsed since the date of my last letter; but this will not surprise you when you hear that your friend F. has been alarmingly ill. Our pleasant excursions in Venice and the neighbourhood were suddenly exchanged for the confinement and anxieties of a sick room, which those of us in attendance never left but to obtain fresh air on the water. Long and painful has been her malady,—a fever of the country, of more than six weeks' duration; but doubt and distress, at the end of that time, were exchanged for happiness, when, after a protracted stay of two months in Venice,

we were enabled to bring away our dear invalid, still feeble, indeed, yet daily improving.

To those whose vigils have been kept, in suspense and fear, in the sick chamber, how abundant the reward, how rich the boon, when the privations and watchings affection makes light of are crowned with success, and have obtained that blessing upon them without which vain were the help of man! Not the soft breath of Spring bursting the rose's crimson bands, is found half so beautiful by the admiring florist, as to the anxious eye of her who has nurse-tended a beloved one, is the first faint appearance of renovating health, coming into the wan cheek like the earliest flush of dawn, to dissipate terror and darkness.

Independently of the particular circumstance which made us impatient to get into more bracing air, we should, at all events much before this time, (the end of July,) have been right glad, had it been in our power, to have left Venice,—a city which, from its entire pe-

cularity and rare combinations, for a brief period fills its visitors with rapture. In no other city with which I am acquainted are there so many noble edifices, including churches and trophies of conquest from far distant lands, and so many curious or rare works of art, collected together in so small a space. Picturesque buildings on islands far and distant, form also a cortège for the Queen of the Adriatic, which adds an indescribable charm ; and while all is novelty, wonder and delight are, I believe, generally the predominating sentiments of her visitors. But to such as are accustomed to "meadows trim with daisies pied," to the "pomp of groves and garniture of fields," and all the inexhaustible loveliness of luxuriant vegetation, (the lichens, ferns, and wild roses amongst others,) the want of rural enjoyment by habit rendered necessary, is soon felt to be an evil, that no magnificent structures, or other productions of art, can compensate for ; and with regard to which, "the heart distrusting asks" if these can satisfy it.

In Venice, I was often reminded of this line of Cowper's—

"God made the country, man the town,"

whilst looking round on the grand fabrics, the view of which, for a continuance, is not to be compared in the power of giving pleasure with such "rural sights and rural sounds" as are attainable in the environs of all other cities that I know of. The neighbourhood of Rome, indeed, does not abound in such; but it has its own peculiar interest. It is true, deep shadows have fallen there; they do not, however, obstruct the glories presenting themselves to the mental vision; and in the immediate vicinity of the Eternal City, cultivated gardens and vineyards are seen in all directions, as well as the superb pleasure-grounds of noblemen's villas; and then Frescati, Tivoli, and Albano, where triumphant nature has its sway, are not far distant. But at Venice, "the sea, the sea," is alone man's wide domain.

We were so anxious for our weakly com-

panion to have the benefit of mountain air, that we did not return to Padua, as we had intended. We were informed, that by going in another direction, and arranging for our carriage to meet us at Mestre, we should reach the Tyrol much more quickly. We therefore followed this plan, and on the first evening after leaving Venice, we reached Cenada, a little hamlet, at the foot of very steep picturesque hills, on which were growing, most conspicuously, the fine shrub covered with flowers, called hibiscus. Such a transition, in a few hours from the water-encircled city, and its canals, to the bold, green, craggy heights of Cenada, appeared almost as wonderful and sudden as the change which took place in the days of the fairies, when a certain well-known youth, who was a man by day, or, *vice versa*, became a bear by night.

We could do little else but admire the beautiful dress worn by that portion of the world before us "in verdure clad." I felt somewhat in the way I could have imagined one of Noah's

family, on first stepping out of the ark on *terra firma*, and seeing the green earth and its olive-branches. The hills of Cenada presented to our view, not merely shrubs and trees, in all the splendour of luxuriant foliage, but also castles, on every commanding site. It has been evidently a strongly-fortified place, where either barriers had been erected to oppose the Venetian power, or it was made a stronghold by the gothic invaders in the olden time; for it was through the Tyrol that Theodoric and Attila poured their devastating hordes upon the fertile plains of Italy; and it is said that by the Tyrol also Brennus and his Gauls had previously found the way to pay their memorable visit to Rome.

The towers which had belonged to the men of war are now converted into chapels, at least such of them as are not altogether in ruins, and prayers are offered within the walls, formerly destined to less holy purposes. The principal and largest castle we saw is situated on a commanding elevation, and is at present an exten-

sive and commodious residence occupied by the bishop. We climbed, before breakfast, to the giddy height, and looked from the battlemented walls over an immense extent of richly-cultivated country. Our cicerone pointed out Venice, which place I was glad enough to perceive in the far distance.

Our road lay next day through scenery of a sombre character; the mountains are rocky and rugged, and deep small lakes are frequently seen at their bases. One of these is called (for what reason we did not hear) “*il lago di morte*”

At Longerone, where we passed the following night, the scenery became grand and picturesque, and so continued through the whole of our next day’s route to this place, Cortina, which is a little village embosomed in the midst of particularly fine, bold, and grand objects. The rocky points of the mountains seem to cleave the skies, like “dread ambassadors from earth to heaven;” whilst in the little valleys beneath are verdant fields, hamlets, and num-

rous small churches, whose red painted spires in all directions picturesquely distinguish them from the dark pine trees, with which their heaven directed points mingle.

The soil here is sterile, and only made productive by "labour's earnest call." The inhabitants seem to be of a most decent description, their houses and persons orderly and cleanly. At an early hour this morning during a ramble along a footpath and by a rushing stream leading to a church, we met troops of children, boys and girls, going to school. Their coarse clothing was whole and warm, though in most instances much patched, indicating the careful and industrious habits which can just ward off the "looped and windowed raggedness" of extreme poverty. We asked some of the youngsters to show us the books held in their hands. They were written in the German and Italian languages, and seemed well adapted for elementary instruction: amongst some excellent directions for children's behaviour at home, they were desired to read portions of what they were

learning at school to their mother whilst she was employed at her needle; when perchance she “gars auld claes look amraig as weel’s the new;” a hint calculated to be useful to both parties.

After our long ramble we returned with good appetites to breakfast at the little inn, where we had everything comfortable, though, in external appearance, it is not better than one of our most ordinary public-houses. At first we were doubtful whether we should find sufficiently good accommodation for passing the night there; and, on inspection, were agreeably surprised to find bed-rooms of the very neatest description, and in all respects what we could desire. The landlord appears to be a very poor and dispirited man. He told us that he had possessed sixteen acres of land on the side and at the foot of a neighbouring mountain, which, meagre as was the soil, more than supplied necessaries for his family and the guests who visited his auberge. All his savings went to the improvement of his farm. On the 1st of

last November a portion of an adjoining mountain, close to the village, showed symptoms of disruption, which quickly increased, and during sixteen days there fell thence masses, which completely covered all the cultivated lands lying contiguous to his farm, which, together with several others, became heaps of rocks and stones. A fine bridge of solid masonry, but then recently erected by the Austrian government, was swept away by a torrent of mud and rocks which descended from the mountain apparently from a distance of two or three miles. The vast mass slipped down in consequence of long-continued rains having softened the stratum of clay, or bed on which the higher part of the mountain rested, on the side nearest to Cortina. It quickly passed into a lake lying beneath, at the distance of about half a mile, whose waters overflowed with the addition of mud and stones, and spreading over the adjacent farms, covered them to the depth of from ten to fifteen feet, and at the same time overwhelmed five or six good farm-houses. The

poor inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood sought shelter in a village, on the opposite bank of a deep ravine, down which rushed a rapid stream from the upper side of the valley.

The terrified inhabitants of Cortina saw the moving mass for several days rolling on into the ravine, and apprehended that it would entirely fill up the hollow, then move straight forward and engulf the lower part of the principal street. But, fortunately, the swell of rains in the river diverted the whole mass down the current ; it then acquired so rapid a force by the descent, as quickly carried away the beautiful bridge in fragments into the valley. Thus the half solid flood rolled on, leaving in the fields, for the extent of some miles from the mountain to the valley, an immensely thick bed of mud and stones.

Our landlord accompanied us to look at the débris which we saw the poor ruined farmers busily employed in endeavouring to clear away ; but it was his opinion that the greater portion of

the submerged land could never be reclaimed. He told us that he and his immediate neighbours had removed their furniture into the church, in the full expectation that their houses in the village (of which our inn is one) would be destroyed. Happily the rolling masses took another direction, and thus to him and some fellow-sufferers, a remnant of property was spared; for which blessing, when the danger was over, all the villagers assembled in their little church to return thanks to God. There is something very touching in the hearty piety of the mountaineers, sparing themselves the process of looking to secondary causes, and referring at once their chastisement and blessings to Providence, in the full assurance, that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground" without the knowledge of their heavenly Father, who can give or take away, as seemeth best unto him.

The hollow of the mountain, from whence the ruin had proceeded, appeared to us as large as that caused by a similar land-slip which occurred at no very distant period, at the Ross-

berg, near Lucerne, and we were informed that similar phænomena are not unfrequent in these parts, though, fortunately, not on so extensive a scale as the last.

The grand and romantic character of the scenery, the surrounding peaks covered with snow, and tinted with the bright roseate hues of the setting sun, had given us, on our approach to it, a lively impression of the beauty of this place; but the sight of such desolation, and the thought of the many disasters and hardships to which these hardy mountaineers are exposed, have excited, previously to our departure, emotions of a very different character.

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LETTER XXXVII.

Innspruck.

THE mountain traveller, with spirits exhilarated, and senses rendered keenly alive by the elasticity imparted by every breath of air inhaled, vainly believes that the vivid impressions the mind receives can be communicated by words; as well might one attempt to fix the rainbow's light, as hope to embody in description the ever-changing combinations of various kinds of beauty, which present themselves in scenes where

Nature loves to sit alone,
Majestic on a craggy throne.

Scotland, not long since, boasted of him who could, in harmonious lines, more faithfully than

others of his class, portray every dancing sun-beam on the mountain's side, or sun-lit cloud that hung upon its brow, or was mirrored in the glassy lake or stream, mingling its reflected beauty with the variegated colours of the tangled brake or wooded dell. But Scott rests in Dryburg Abbey, where wild flowers are hanging around the arched recess in which lies the magician, now, as to all that regards this world, "to dumb forgetfulness a prey." But his sun-like genius only *seems* to have set; already its light may be shining in another sphere, whilst to us he is a loss as great as he was an honour and a delight to our country; but I am not going to descant on what every British heart feels for our enchanting bard; my purpose is to tell you, in a brief manner, somewhat of our most charming journey through the Tyrol.

After leaving Cortina, the scenery continued grand, but less dreary and rugged. Indian corn, in its rich and ample dimensions, was seen on every level spot where verdant meadow land

did not occupy the soil. Pine-trees covered the mountains, unless when projecting rocks, that denied access to vegetation, sent forth the bounding, sparkling waterfall, and occasionally the sun's rays glanced upon distant peaks, where we perceived still unmelted snow, bright, like gems on the diadem of beauty. Such were some of the features of the scenery through which we had the enjoyment of travelling for several successive days. The weather, which was so overpoweringly warm at Venice, became all that was desirable, and health seemed literally borne on every breeze, judging by the reviving effects we all more or less experienced.

We never alighted, either for the purpose of taking refreshment or passing the night at any of the little inns, or rural habitations, which are alone to be met, without finding much to gratify us, not only in their perfect cleanliness, but in all that we could observe of the cheerful, happy inmates. The dress, too, gave an additional interest to the peasantry, or the people I should rather say, for where we have been in the Tyrol

resembles a primitive, but not a savage state of society, in there being no difference of classes—at least none perceptible to us. The men are a particularly fine, dignified-looking race, yet blithe, and their steps full of the elasticity arising from the freedom of mountain solitudes. Their noble appearance brought to our mind the beautiful lines of Wordsworth,—

. "How divine
The liberty for frail, for mortal man,
To roam at large among unpeopled glens ;
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps—regions consecrate
To oldest time!"

Contrary to the laws of society in general, but not always to those of animal life, (for we sometimes find the male species the most variously and beautifully clothed, amongst birds for instance,) the dress of the men is far more to be admired than that of the women. The high-pointed hats of the former are decorated with flowers or tassels, and not unfrequently the wild bird's wing, which latter, perhaps, as

being in strict accordance with surrounding objects, has the best effect of all. Then they wear short jackets, and otherwise tight garments, which show off their light bounding figures to the greatest advantage. The female costume is far from being equally favourable to the *beau sexe*; their too numerous petticoats have a clumsy appearance; the youngest girls wear six or seven, very short, and all composed of thick material; whilst women arrived at matronly dignity assume half a dozen additional, in the way we who can afford them put on diamonds, whilst our juniors are content with wreaths of roses. Their heads are proportionably enveloped in black massive articles of the shape of a bee-hive. The heaviness of their general appearance is in some degree relieved by full, long white sleeves, and coloured laced bodices.

At first it seemed to our eyes next to impossible, that women so disguised could have attractions for the young men, who look of a different species altogether. When, however, our

grandmothers wore “the sevenfold fence, stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale,” and decked their heads with pyramids of gauze, they were found, by all accounts, not less bewitching, (with the addition too of black patches on their faces,) than are their more simply-robed successors,—whose partners at the ball of the night before we do not now hear of riding over half a county next morning, to inquire if the belles have escaped or taken cold, whereas, in the juvenile days of the old ladies alluded to, such devoirs were expected as matter of course, from those whom they had not waltzed with, but condescendingly suffered to touch the tips of their fingers in the minuet de la cour, the cotillon, or gavote, all which I think, on reflection, proves that mere fashion in dress possesses neither a superlative charm nor the contrary; so I dare say that Cupid is equally potent and mischievous in the midst of all these petticoats and bee-hives, as he is ever found to be elsewhere amongst the fascinations that are aided by wreaths of roses and orange

flowers. I must, however, in justice to his taste, remark, that the girls and women here only wear their clumsy habiliments out of doors, when, I suppose, they prepare for conquest. At home, and at their ordinary work, they are attired more simply, and it may, I think, be truly said of them, that they are, "when unadorned, adorned the most."

Our postillions always had a horn at their side, which was sounded frequently, and often brought forth echoes that reverberated among the mountain recesses, which sent back softened sounds, as if to tell some gentle spirits had been aroused "most musical, most melancholy."

We observed everywhere indications of the existence of much religious feeling amongst the inhabitants. The churches are surprisingly numerous for the apparently scanty population; and not only on the road side, at short intervals, are crosses and other aids to devotion for the unlettered, but everywhere we stopped during ten days, we saw representations, more or less

well executed, of our Saviour; all of considerable size, and placed in those parts of the houses where the greatest numbers could conveniently assemble for the purpose of joining in prayer. At one of the inns, while we were at tea, we heard the Ave Maria chaunted, and on going to our chamber-door we saw all the domestics of the house assembled, and on their knees, before a full-length figure of our Redeemer on the cross. Thus they continued for about half an hour, and I understood from them, that in this way, such members of the family as could not attend the vespers, made themselves amends for the omission.

At another little auberge we asked in the evening for some milk, and were told that we could not be just then supplied, as the cows would not be milked until after the Ave Maria. There is something very sublime in the devotion so constantly found amongst those who abide in the recesses of the mountains. Where resistance to the undue exercise of human authority is most indomitable, that of a higher power is

acknowledged in a spirit of deep humility and constant sense of dependence.

The valleys in the portion we saw of the Tyrol are, generally speaking, much more open than those of Switzerland, and therefore admit of the cheerfulness of cultivation combined with the varied scenery of the mountains. In passing the Brenner there is beheld none of the savage grandeur of the Simplon ; but the views are continually changing and always beautiful. In the Tyrol the mind is not awed by the incomunicable impression of the sublime imparted by Mount Blanc and the spotless Jungfrau ; besides which there are in Switzerland the Eigher Wetterhorn, and several other mountains of known celebrity and dread magnificence, all higher than any in the Tyrol. Nevertheless the charms of cultivated valleys, fine graceful fruit trees, adorned with castles, churches, and hamlets for so vast an extent of country, renders such a journey as that we have just made one of the most delightful that can be imagined. But for pedestrians there are not,

I understand, the facilities for those Alpine excursions, which are found so full of interest in Switzerland, where the far up pastures are full of life, and exhibit thriving colonies and dairies, which supply half the continent with cheese—an article, by-the-bye, almost unknown in the Tyrol.

At a little distance from the foot of Mount Brenner the view opened magnificently, and we saw this town of Innspruck, situated in a fine, rich, extensive valley, varying in breadth from one to three miles. The noble river of the Inn winds its way amongst the numerous mountains all of great height and in keeping with the large scale of the other surrounding objects. This ancient city, which contains many fine works of art, is the capital of the Tyrol, and a charming town it is,—antique, but cleanly, and cheerful to the last degree. The streets are very wide, and to the exterior of the houses are given the most delicate colours, such as faint greens, and buffs, and all have the appearance of perfect freshness, unstained and un-

faded ; the walls also are a good deal ornamented, not exactly by being painted, but otherwise decorated in a way which adds to their gay and rich appearance. Flowers also lend their attractions ; the windows are filled with them, which, indeed, we observed was the case even in the smallest villages, and most ordinary looking houses by the roadside.

The Tyrol was given to Austria in 1363 by Margaret, surnamed Maultasch, or Great Mouth. She was the last heir of the Meinhardis, Counts of Goerz and Tyrol. She was first married to a Duke of Bavaria, and secondly to a duke of Austria. Having no child, she left to the family of the latter her large possessions, which formed an important acquisition, being a strong mountainous boundary of their dominions. They made excellent sovereigns to the Tyrolesc, who possessed, in fact, the privileges of a free state protected by a monarchy. Their attachment to Austria was consequently very great ; and when Bonaparte, amongst his new divisions of kingdoms, trans-

ferred the Tyrol to Bavaria, the indignant inhabitants refused to acquiesce in the change, and with various success combated the united French and Bavarian armies, from which they took, and for some time kept possession of, Innspruck. The great leader of the mountaineers was Alexander Hofer, who performed prodigies of valour, and manifested in other respects the abilities of a great general. At length, after having overcome surprising difficulties, he was betrayed and made prisoner in 1809, whilst seeking refuge in a cavern. Bonaparte ordered that he should be taken to Mantua, and there shot. A few hours previously to that sad catastrophe he wrote a letter expressive of the greatest kindness towards his friends, affection for his wife, and entire trust and confidence in God. Piety had always been a striking trait in his character. To those humble neighbours who had partaken of his hospitality he was accustomed to say, "Shall we, who have eaten together, not pray together?"

"Then kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prayed."

The memory of Hofer is enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen, like that of William Tell's in the universal heart of Switzerland. Every relic which belonged to him,—his belt, his horn, &c., were shown to us as the most precious articles, and he himself was spoken of with ardent enthusiasm. When the fatal moment arrived, he was ordered to kneel down and suffer his eyes to be bandaged, but courageous to the last, he said, "No; I have been accustomed to look into the mouths of cannon, and to stand upright before my Creator, and in that posture I will deliver up my spirit to him." To the corporal who headed the party that were to fire on him he gave a piece of money, desiring he would perform that duty well. Perhaps his executioners were moved by compassion, for, albeit unused to quail in the fiercest conflicts, they trembled when they had to fire upon an innocent man, and every one of them missed their aim: a cooler marksman,

standing by, observed the failure, and mercifully despatched the hero.

In some other instances Bonaparte destroyed in cold blood men who owed him no allegiance, and had betrayed no duty, but merely, as in the cases of Hofer and Toussaint, defended rights of which he was the invader. Such recollections effectually stifle the sigh that might otherwise arise in our breasts for his own fate. We feel for him, not as for the eagle taken from his airy and chained to the rock against which he chafed and dashed himself to pieces, but as for the vulture, whose seizure has prevented further libations of innocent blood.

Besides Hofer there were other gallant men who distinguished themselves in the war of independence of which he was the head and leader. Next to him, and perhaps his equal in courage and spirited achievements, was Spechbacher. He was not captured, like Hofer, but his protracted sufferings from wounds, and the severe and almost incredible privations he endured whilst effecting his escape from the

enemy, broke down an iron constitution, and he died of exhaustion.

Another who took a leading part in the peasant war still lives. He was offered pardon for his crime of patriotism if he would surrender himself; but putting no trust in French promises, when he found nothing more could be done for the good cause, he made his escape to Switzerland, and from thence to Vienna. This man, Haspinger, was a Capuchin monk of the little village of Clausen in the central Tyrol. He was aroused from habits of peace and inaction on hearing of the approach of an invading enemy, and seizing a large wooden cross, he patrolled the country, and summoned to resistance those who could bear arms; and not in vain; for all such as heard him obeyed the call. Like Peter the Hermit, who kindled the flame which led to the first great crusade, his appeal was all-powerful, and crowds thronged to the standard of Hofer. Haspinger was not only instrumental in awakening the energies of the people, but he fought along with them, and mainly contributed to several victories gained by peasants over the disciplined veterans of the combined armies of France and Bavaria. But when Hofer fell, the mountain warfare ended. Haspinger has again found a retreat in a convent, where he is sometimes visited by persons who respect and honour the brave old man.

After Bonaparte's downfall, the Tyrol was restored to Austria, the peasantry became again happy, and the love of freedom doubtless, as heretofore, dwells amongst the craggy heights which are in all countries the places of its resort. When the plains, and all that they inherit, are subjugated and brought under control, eternal barriers against the usurpations of men who would enslave their fellows are found in the mountains which nurse the undying cause of liberty. Nature there, under every varying aspect, gives her lessons, and speaks to men of freedom. The waters bound forward undirected as the wild birds in their course; animals, unfettered as the breezes, roam at large amidst the wide expanse which owns no man as its lord; one supreme power alone is present to men's minds, which draws towards it profound homage, whether it be named God, or the great Spirit. And thus, when rightly understood, whether amongst the loftiest mountains, or in the level plains, amidst the busy hum of men in the complicated systems of social existence,

" 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it."

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